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# The Christchurch Urban Design Panel:

# Its role and influence on residential development within central city Christchurch post-earthquake

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A Dissertation

submitted in partial fulfilment

of the requirements for the Degree of

Master of Planning

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Lincoln University

by

Matt McLachlan

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Abstract of a Dissertation submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the Degree of Master of Planning.

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by

Matt McLachlan

During the 21st century, New Zealand has experienced increasing public concern over the quality of the design and appearance of new developments, and their effects on the urban environment. In response to this, a number of local authorities developed a range of tools to address this issue, including urban design panels to review proposals and provide independent advice. Following the 2010 and 2011 Canterbury earthquake sequence, the commitment to achieve high quality urban design within Christchurch was given further importance, with the city facing the unprecedented challenge of rebuilding a 'vibrant and successful city'.

The rebuild and regeneration reinforced the need for independent design review, putting more focus and emphasis on the role and use of the urban design panel; first through collaboratively assisting applicants in achieving a better design outcome for their development by providing an independent set of eyes on their design; and secondly in assisting Council officers in forming their recommendations on resource consent decisions. However, there is a perception that urban design and the role of the urban design panel is not fully understood, with some stakeholders arguing that Council's urban design requirements are adding cost and complexity to their developments.

The purpose of this research was to develop a better understanding on the role of the Christchurch urban design panel post-earthquake in the central city; its direct and indirect influence on the built environment; and the deficiencies in the broader planning framework and institutional settings that it might be addressing. Ultimately, the perceived role of the Panel is understood, and there is agreement that urban design is having a positive influence on the built environment, albeit viewed differently amongst the varying groups involved. What has become clear throughout this research is that the perceived tension between the development community and urban design well and truly exists, with the urban design panel contributing towards this. This tension is exacerbated further

through the cost of urban design to developers, and the drive for financial return from their investments.

The panel, albeit promoting a positive experience, is simply a 'tick box' exercise for some, and as the research suggests, groups or professional are determining themselves what constitutes good urban design, based on their attitude, the context in which they sit and the financial constraints to incorporate good design elements. It is perhaps a bleak time for urban design, and more about building homes.

**Keywords:** Urban design, urban design panel, urban design review, residential development, planning, Christchurch City Council, regulatory, Christchurch

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# List of Abbreviations

| | |
|---|---|
| CABE | Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment |
| CCC | Christchurch City Council |
| CCRP | Central City Recovery Plan |
| GCP | Greater Christchurch Partnership |
| MfE | Ministry for the Environment |
| NZ | New Zealand |
| NZUDP | New Zealand Urban Design Protocol |
| RMA | Resource Management Act 1991 |
| RPS | Regional Policy Statement |
| UDP | Urban design panel |
| UDS | Greater Christchurch Urban Development Strategy |

# Chapter 1

# Introduction

## 1.1 The changing context of cities

> *"Cities have the capability of providing something for everybody, only because, and only when, they are created by everybody". (Jacobs, 1961)*

There's no doubt that cities and towns are complex. They are places that change daily, and face everyday challenges from liveability, economic vitality, and a growing desire to express society and culture. As urbanist Jane Jacobs (1961) observed, the *"point of cities is multiplicity of choice… they evolve in unexpected and unpredictable ways".* There has been more emphasis on the idea that cities should be actively planned, with a focus on design excellence in central urban areas to reinvigorate centres of human activity. This is where urban design is seen as a key factor in shaping the outcomes of our towns and cities, seeking to create sustainable urban environments, making connections between people and places, movement and urban form and overall liveability (Gerner, 2002).

The first step to understanding the significance of urban design is recognising the structural changes that cities have gone through. Two centuries ago, the industrial era dramatically changed the configuration of cities, changing them into workshops of the world (Madanipour, 2006). Nowadays, cities are focused around a locus of exchange; for ideas, goods and services to be traded for money through face to face or mediated market places (Carmona et al, 2002). In its broadest sense, urban design has contributed to this structural change, projecting a new image that befits society by shaping the urban fabric in new ways. However, a structural change of this magnitude can only be made possible through the exercising of economic and political power, shaping new urban conditions through making particular choices, giving priority to particular visions and strategies, and privileging some individuals and groups over others (Madanipour, 2006).

But what constitutes good design in the built environment? This varies between stakeholders, and will generally depend on how people perceive them, rather than on the exact nature of the development. An office worker or someone shopping may have a different view of what makes a good urban environment from the building owner or landlord charged with its maintenance; whilst a developer may perceive the added value in a development very differently from local residents. Urban design is holistic, and reflects the multi-faceted nature of urban areas, where so many perspectives and issues are interconnected. Therefore, the activity of urban design needs to

reconcile and sometimes balance very different private (economic viability) and public (key objectives met through the development process) aspirations in order to influence or be successful.

New Zealand's high level of urbanisation, combined with the key role our cities play in the economy and society mean that improving how our cities develop and function is a critical component in delivering key political objectives, including economic, environmental, cultural and social. However, what's more important is the continued opportunity to better use our urban planning system to achieve these goals, similar to what governments in Australia and the United States are doing (Ministry for the Environment [MfE], 2010a). This approach sees improved planning and urban design as an important contributor to developing competitive cities.

## 1.2 Urban design and the Resource Management Act 1991

Since 1991, land use planning in New Zealand has been primarily managed by the Resource Management Act 1991 (RMA), which was seen as a bold replacement for the 1977 Town and Country Planning Act (TCPA). The RMA is underpinned by the concept of sustainable management (section 5(1)), and defined the role of planning to manage (now and in the future) the adverse environmental effects that activities and development impose in a way, or at a rate, which enables people and communities to provide for their social, economic and cultural wellbeing and for their health and safety.

Although the RMA signalled a shift away from prescriptive land use considerations, to regulations informed by environmental values, the planning community still adopted the zoning of land use from the TCPA as the favoured means of avoiding, mitigating or remedying environmental effects. The potential for more measured development in sensitive areas or for new approaches to environmental management yielded to the old practice of writing rules about what might be done (more importantly, what might not be done), and where (McDermott, 2016).

While the intent of the RMA was to protect the 'natural' environment, its scope in practice does extend to include the built environment:

> *"amenity values mean those natural or physical qualities and characteristics of an area that contribute to people's appreciation of its pleasantness, aesthetic coherence, and cultural and recreational attributes".*

This definition is all-encompassing and open to wide interpretation (and debate), given the scope of natural and physical resources is unlimited, covering land, water, air, soil, minerals, and energy, all forms of plants and animals (whether native or introduced) and *all structures* [emphasis added]. It also ties the meaning of *amenity values* [emphasis added] to people, places and is an important

concept in the development spectrum and statutory processes under the RMA. However, the fact that words such as 'planning', 'urban' and 'design' are not specifically referenced in the RMA led to some accusing it of being anti-urban, emphasising biophysical assets over the social and economic (Memon and Gleeson, 1995).

What-ever urban design New Zealand had previously changed post-RMA. Gunder (2015) believes that:

> *"Once government had constituted a legislated framework… for ensuring that acceptable thresholds of environmental effects for specific activities were not exceeded, planning was legally and institutionally repositioned away from a prescriptive consideration of physical space, the built environment and, especially, from urban design and related aesthetic concerns"* (as cited in Haarholf, 2016).

As such, the RMA has limited capacity to recognise and promote the positive economic, social and environmental contributions of high-quality, sustainable urban design and planning (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development [OECD], 2017). For example, benefits of sustainable urban design are missed because quantitative (the number of car parks, building height) takes precedence over qualitative concerns, and its reactive nature – managing negative effects rather than promoting positive ones (NZPC, 2016). There's a good argument here that the way that the RMA is framed specifically discourages proper consideration of urban design outcomes (Hunt, 2008).

## 1.3 Barriers to achieving successful cities in New Zealand

In 2010, the Ministry for the Environment (MfE) released a technical working paper – *Building competitive cities: Reform of the urban and infrastructure planning system*. This paper identified the following issues that were creating barriers for successful urban places in New Zealand:

1. There are concerns that the RMA's emphasis on the natural environment, including its definition of the environment does not adequately address the complex social and economic components of our urban environments. The MfE (2010a) conclude, "the RMA is being asked to do a job it is not explicitly designed to do" (p. 6) when it comes to urban development and the built environment.

2. New Zealand's planning system is highly devolved, giving local authorities significant autonomy to set their own rules and make decisions on land use within their respective areas. However, the three major pieces of legislation governing the urban environment; the RMA; the Local Government Act 2002 (LGA); and the Land Transport Management Act 2003 (LTMA) all serve different legal purposes and processes which are not actively designed to work together

(Kiroff, 2011). Therefore, across the whole system, there is complexity, fragmentation and confusion from all parties involved.

3. Quality urban development is a collaborative effort; requiring coordination and alignment in decision-making, as well as effective or meaningful engagement between key stakeholders affected by urban development. However, there is some inconsistency with regards to decision-making, mainly due to a lack of alignment between legislation. This creates uncertainty and increased risk to investors.

4. Effective implementation relies on being able to access a variety of tools and mechanisms which are best for the job in specific circumstances and complement the broader planning framework. This in turn affects the ability to achieve broader objectives; such as economic growth, value for money from investment and well-designed urban environments that create value. However, some of these tools and mechanisms available are ineffective in practice (need to be complemented with new tools to be effective and not being used to their full potential such as urban design panels). Yet, lack of clarity through various legislations, notably the RMA, grouped with limited national guidance, has made it difficult for local authorities to implement planning objectives including urban design related criteria efficiently and effectively (OECD, 2017).

## 1.4 Putting urban design on the agenda

New Zealand experienced a 'shift in focus' during the 21st century with regards to urban design. There was increasing public concern over the quality of the design and appearance of new developments, and their effects on the urban environment (MfE, 2005a). In response to this, a number of local authorities started developing a range of tools, such as plans to implement national objectives and standards, regulatory tools which include urban design goals, criteria or urban design assessment when deciding on resource consents, non-statutory design guidelines, or having established urban design panels to review proposals and provide independent advice (OECD, 2017).

The Christchurch UDP was established in 2008, as part of the Council's commitment to the Greater Christchurch Urban Development Strategy (UDS). The panel is made up from some of the region's leading architects, landscape architects, urban designers and property professionals. The panel process seeks to provide the added value of peer review and advice to applicants and their consultants, while promoting the best outcome for the urban environment. The panel has no mandate to represent the public nor the Council. In order to maintain the confidence of developers, panel meetings are closed to the public, with only the applicants nominated representatives, the panel itself and Council representatives in attendance. To encourage developers to undertake

consultation with the panel, the Council meets the costs of the panel, recognising the wider public benefits of well-designed urban environments (CCC, n.d.-b).

The process aims to minimise delays to applications and provides the benefit to applicants of 'no surprise' once the proposal reaches the formal hearing and decision-making stage. Once an application has been submitted formally for approval, the proposal can be re-considered by the panel, and recommendations incorporated into the planner's final report. Panel members are paid a hourly rate for attendance at meetings for a set number of hours depending on the complexity of the application. Additional time spent, including site visits and extra research is not reimbursed. Members of the Panel are bound by the Council's Code of Conduct for elected members, specifically in relation to Part 1: General Principles of Public Life, and Part 2: Disclosure of Pecuniary and Other Interests, Contact with the Media regarding Council and Committee Decisions and Confidential Information (CCC, n.d.-b).

The Panel aims to focus on how buildings or development relate to the surrounding public space, in particular how the proposal fits into and improves the existing environment (CCC, n.d.-b). Design assessment criteria and/or design guidelines in the City Plan, or developed in conjunction with the community form the basis for the design review (CCC, n.d.-b). There are a series of triggers that identify what proposals would benefit from independent design review, including but not limited to scale, complexity and location. These triggers are also reflected in the relevant parts of the District Plan where urban design controls apply. In the context of this research, the relevant triggers associated with residential development include (CCC, n.d.-b):

- Development with eight or more residential units;
- Mixed-use development with three or more residential units; and
- Is considered to be of significance by a Principal Urban Design Advisor or Urban Design Team Leader, in respect to scale, location and potential adverse effects on the local community.

The Council's Principal Urban Designer or Urban Design Team Leader can advise the panel to review both regulatory and non-regulatory planning tools to ensure the professional opinions of the design and development communities are taken into account. The Council also has the ability to determine whether projects that do not meet the criteria specified are of a scale and complexity that warrants design review.

The UDP is not a decision-making body for resource consent applications, however, its recommendations may be considered amongst other matters, on balance, by the Council planner processing the consent application. If for any reason the panel advice is contrary to that of Council staff, the requirements of the District Plan and/or established policy frameworks take precedence

over panel recommendations. Resource consent decisions rest with the Council or the delegated decision-making body.

## 1.5 Scope of this research

Following the 2010 and 2011 Canterbury earthquake sequence, the commitment to achieve high quality urban design was given further importance, with Christchurch facing the unprecedented challenge of rebuilding a '*vibrant and successful city'*. This commitment was embedded within key planning documents including the Central City Recovery Plan, the Canterbury Regional Policy Statement and the Christchurch District Plan.

The rebuild and regeneration reinforced the need for independent design review, putting more focus and emphasis on the role and use of the UDP; first through collaboratively assisting applicants in achieving a better design outcome for their development by providing an independent set of eyes on their design; and secondly in assisting Council officers in forming their recommendations on resource consent decisions. However, there is a perception that urban design and the role of the UDP is not fully understood, with some stakeholders arguing that Council's urban design requirements are adding cost and complexity to their developments. The Property Council of New Zealand (as cited in Stock, 2017) stated that "It is common for councils to place onerous and often complex financial and regulatory visual amenity conditions on development consents. Councils have no understanding of the true financial cost of these and the impact on development viability for a project." In response to this, the New Zealand Planning Institute (as cited in Stock, 2017) said that "It's possible to criticise urban designers to be a law unto themselves, but they emerge in situations where the planning framework creates problems."

While support for the use of design review panels is generally positive, Moore, Alves, Horne & Martel (2015) considered there to be two common weaknesses; first a number of stakeholders believed that some panels were pushing their own agendas, and not allowing an effective review process; and secondly the feedback from the panel was subjective, and could be disregarded by the local authority through the formal approval process.

This raises questions around the role of design review panels and its relationship to the final design/built outcome, and the deficiencies in the broader planning framework and institutional settings that it might be addressing. Therefore, this research seeks to develop a better understanding of the panel's influence on residential development post-earthquake and how different stakeholders view the urban design review process. Central city Christchurch will be used as a case study in order to answer the following questions:

1. What are the key challenges and opportunities to good urban design in the central city?

2. Is the role of the UDP understood by the various users?
3. Is urban design review influencing these users?
4. Should the UDP retain its advisory status or is there pressure to change to a more formal process?

For transparency, it is necessary to acknowledge my particular interest in this research. I have over 19 years' experience working in the field of land development, as a consultant planner. There is no question that this has been influential in shaping my prior understanding of the research topic to some degree. It is critical to be mindful of such positions that may colour my view and potentially alter my research interpretations and representations (Etherington, 2007; Christians, 2000; Edwards & Mauthner, 2002; Berger, 2015).

## 1.6 Structure

This dissertation is compiled into seven chapters. Following this introduction, Chapter 2 reviews the academic literature on urban design; how it differs from urban planning, its definition, the value of good urban design and challenges. The literature review then introduces the theoretical context behind urban design review, the models used, its principles and the rising significance in design review. Chapter 3 sets out the methods used to conduct the research, including the use of a case study and semi-structured interviews. Chapter 4 introduces the central city of Christchurch, the impact of the Canterbury earthquake sequence and the urban design 'blueprint' that is guiding the rebuild. Chapter 5 presents the results from the semi-structured interviews, identifying key themes that emerged. A discussion follows in Chapter 6 which considers the results together with the reviewed literature and case study area. Concluding this dissertation, Chapter 7 provides a summary of the research and offers suggestions for further research in this field.

# Chapter 2

# Literature Review

This chapter forms the basis of the theoretical framework for this research. The literature review is structured into two parts; first an overview of urban design; its origins, how it relates to urban planning and the value and challenges to good urban design. Secondly the emergence of design review; how it is becoming a key mechanism in the development of the built environment; the different models; and the principles that guide design review. By the end of this chapter, the reader will have an overview of urban design theory and the context in which this research fits.

## 2.1 Origins of urban design

Urban design, whether consciously or unconsciously, underpins the development and building of towns and cities, seeking to create sustainable urban environments (Gerner, 2002). It obviously reflects the political and cultural form of society (Gerner, 2002), however, the history of urban form and ideas about good city design has not followed a single, steady path. New physical form ideas – grand diagonal avenues, curvilinear residential streets, garden cities, traffic protected neighbourhood enclaves and high-rise towers – come and have their impacts, then retreat or move in another direction, only to be reborn later or to disappear (Larice and MacDonald, 2013).

Although the contemporary professional use of the term urban design dates from the mid-20$^{th}$ century, urban design as such has been practiced throughout history. One of the earliest writings in the field of urban design is Camillo Sitte's *"City Planning According to Artistic Principles"* of 1889. Sitte directs attention to "aesthetic deficiencies of the rectilinear street and block patterns that had come into vogue" (as cited in Larice and MacDonald, 2013, p. 4). He urged a re-appreciation of the 'picturesque' layouts of medieval cities, particularly arguing that important public gathering spaces and public buildings were "much better defined and emphasised in a picturesquely laid out urban fabric, with its twists and turns and juxtapositions of spatial sizes, than in regular and uniform grid patterns" (as cited in Larice and MacDonald, 2013, p. 4). Sitte's emphasis on aesthetic quality of city's public spaces gave him a significant place in the timeline of urban design (Velibeyoglu, 1999).

By the late 1920s, widespread ownership of vehicles was transforming many cities into places where the public realm was congested with traffic (Velibeyoglu, 1999). This led to a sense of crisis that was "spawned by safety concerns and the perceived need to create areas of refuge from the vehicle onslaught" (as cited in Larice and MacDonald, 2013, p. 4). It was within this context that Clarence Perry originated the neighbourhood unit concept, which proposed an altogether new way of designing cities to control traffic and keep it away from residential neighbourhoods, using strategies

that included street hierarchies and superblocks. This idea had a significant influence on the future form of residential areas in the United States (Larice and MacDonald, 2013).

In 1961, Gordon Cullen's published *"The Concise Township"* had a significant influence on many urban designers (Velibeyoglu, 1999). He examined the traditional artistic approach to city design of theorists including Sitte. Cullen also created the concept of 'serial vision', which defined the urban landscape as a series of related spaces (Gerner, 2002). In the same year, Jane Jacobs published *"The Death and Life of Great American Cities".* In this she claims crime rates in publicly owned spaces were rising because of the "modernist approach of city in the park" (as cited in Velibeyoglu, 1999, p. 2). She argues instead for an "eyes on the street approach to town planning through the resurrection of main public space precedents (e.g. streets, squares)" (as cited in Larice and MacDonald, 2013, p. 4).

Furthermore, Kevin Lynch published *"The Image of the City"* also in 1961. He reduced urban design theory to five basic elements; paths, districts, edges, nodes and landmarks. His usage of mental maps in understanding of the city liberated urban designers from the previous two-dimensional physical master plans of the previous 50 years (Velibeyoglu, 1999).

The preceding published works all make a valuable contribution to the wider universe of urban design.

## 2.2 Is urban design just urban planning?

The modern origins of urban planning arose in the latter part of the 19$^{th}$ century, as a reaction against the disorder of the industrial city (McDermott, 2016). Urban planning sought to promote sanitary and amiable living conditions, educational opportunities and compatible land uses in the urban realm (Schurch, 1999), while at the same time addressing the social and functional concerns of settlements beyond solutions of physical design. By the 20$^{th}$ century, urban planning had developed practical and theoretical perspectives of greater economic and social concerns (Velibeyoglu, 1999), and the provision of architecture that stood in contrast to architecture and the masterplan 'design-led' approaches of, for example, Howard and Corbusier.

Post-World War II planning experienced a shift from a modern, design-based authoritarian discipline through phases best described as "rational-comprehensive, radical-communicative, post-modern, and neoliberal, all leaving their mark on practice today" (McDermott, 2016, p. ii). Of interest to this research is the neoliberal agenda. This [the neoliberal agenda] elevated the market and sought to reduce government interventions that were viewed as increasing costs that further impeded market operations. As McDermott (2016) suggests, "[neoliberalism] was also associated with the new managerialism implemented to increase the efficiency of government. This included moving quasi-

commercial or contestable service delivery to publicly owned trading entities or, where market competition was possible, privatising them" (p. 15).

Sager (2011) had a number of concerns around neoliberal planning; it was one-dimensional and concentrated too much on efficiency and economy; a lack of democratic agenda; and a predilection for private, competitive and market-orientated solutions to urban problems. Healey (2000) suggested that that the neoliberal movement represented a purposeful attack on urban planning, the aim of which was to "seek to transform planning systems into quasi-market regulatory systems for dealing with conflict mediation over complex spatially manifest environmental disputes" (p. 518).

McDermott (2016) further suggests that from a planning perspective, the neoliberal turn not only undermined the social mandate of planning and the community benefits of a focus on equity, "it is also less transparent… and undermines local democracy" (p. 17). Sager (2011) views this as a movement to be resisted:

> *"the challenge to planners is to convince the public at large that market-oriented systems for solving urban problems serve those with high ability to pay far better than those with low ability, and that even the well-off are being served by neo-liberal policies mainly in their capacity as economic actors (producers and consumers). In contrast, the aim of public planning is to treat people as citizens with political roles, rights, and agendas – not only as recipients of service. It is the task of planning to provide public goods even when markets are non-existent, and protect against externalities even when payment systems are not in place. Planners should draw continued attention to collective goods that are not marketable at a profit-giving price, and whose production is therefore not attractive to private companies. Some goods benefitting disadvantaged segments of the population belong to this category, as do redistribution policies in general" (p. 181).*

McDermott (2016) concludes that "the real challenge for planning is to demonstrate that the correction of market failure is indeed warranted and that the benefits to society of planning regulation outweigh the costs of apparently higher transaction costs and lower efficiency" (p. 18). This would more likely be demonstrated if planning is constrained to a scale in which it seeks to operate, is sensitive to local context, and oriented more towards conflict resolution rather than enforcing bureaucratic rules that are all too often based on "received wisdom rather than critical situational analysis" (McDermott, 2016, p. 18).

To better understand what planning is, and what is needed to achieve its objectives, it is useful to look at the definitions offered by the bodies representing professional planning. The Royal Town Planning Institute does not specifically define planning, rather setting out the role of the planner:

> *"A town planner helps communities, companies and politicians to decide on the best way to use land and buildings.*
>
> *A planner's main aim is achieving sustainability. This means balancing different social, environmental and economic issues when official decisions are made on whether a piece of land is built on or not. Another way to describe this job is 'making places', such as towns, for people to live and work. Planners do not construct buildings but recommend how and where buildings should be built, what they should be used for and how they should fit into the local surroundings".*

The American Planning Association defines planning as:

> *"A dynamic profession that works to improve the welfare of people and their communities by creating more convenient, equitable, healthful, efficient, and attractive places for present and future generations".*

The Planning Institute of Australia provides an all-embracing definition: "The process of making decisions to guide further actions…. Specifically concerned with shaping cities, towns and regions by managing development, infrastructure and services".

Closer to home, the New Zealand Planning Institute's Tertiary Education Policy and Accreditation Procedure (2016) recognises that planning is:

> *"a diverse future-orientated discipline which addresses the processes and mechanisms through which built and natural environments are produced, managed and transformed in the interests of the economic, social, cultural and environmental aspirations of communities. As a discipline, planning is shaped by and responds to environmental and cultural values, economic circumstances, technological, political and social imperatives, institutional arrangements, and society's ongoing evaluation of resources and the environment in the broadest sense".*

The above definitions capture the essence of planning – helping create communities that offer better choices for where and how people live, helps communities to envision their future, and helps them find the right balance of new development and essential services, environmental protection, and innovative change. Therefore, one could view planning as a split between process and outcome.

Through its ability to evolve, and recognise and acknowledge its core of physical planning, urban planning has somewhat embraced the importance of urban design (Schurch, 1999). One could argue that urban design and urban planning are closely related, but different in fundamental ways. Urban

design is the physical improvement of the environment, whereas urban planning, in practice, focuses on the management of development through statutory and non-statutory controls. As Schurch (1999) suggests, "the urban planner takes on the role of facilitating and enabling urban design, ideally acting as a design critic" (p. 20).

Although these two disciplines operate on a different level with unique focuses, they share many of the same goals. They both work towards creating sustainable and flexible spaces that improve the quality of life for people living, working, and traveling to an area. Toon (1988) summarises the above into the following paragraph:

> *"Urban design is an integral part of urban planning, the skills of an urban designer are those of an urban planner, the processes of urban designing are those of urban planning, and the mode of implementing urban designs is identical to that of urban plans" (as cited in Schurch, 1999, p. 15).*

However, this leaves the question as to whether urban design should be retained as a subset of urban planning? It should be separate so that planning's core values of serving the collective public interest and the environment may again come to the fore in city-building.

## 2.3 What defines urban design today

There is a common trend among scholars and/or theorists that because of its multi-dimensional nature, the concept of urban design is still open to much interpretation, with different groups of people – professionals, public and the private sector thinking and applying urban design in their own terms (Boyko, Cooper & Davey, 2005). Schurch (1999) believed that urban design exists at the intersect of three main professions; architecture, city planning, and landscape architecture. Lang (2017) considered civil engineering is just as an important component given its relevance to design and development. Furthermore, Lang (2017) believes the majority of professionals involved in what they call urban design avoid having to define the term. The advantage being that each can claim to be a so called 'expert' in urban design, and even claim urban design as their own.

Although urban design may be depicted as an amalgam of the professions above, it has developed into a distinct field of expertise. It has become more development and socially orientated, and more conscious of the political economy in which it is embedded, as well as the volatile nature of decision making in this political arena (Lang, 2017). Figure 2.1 below shows the traditional view and today's view of urban design as described above.

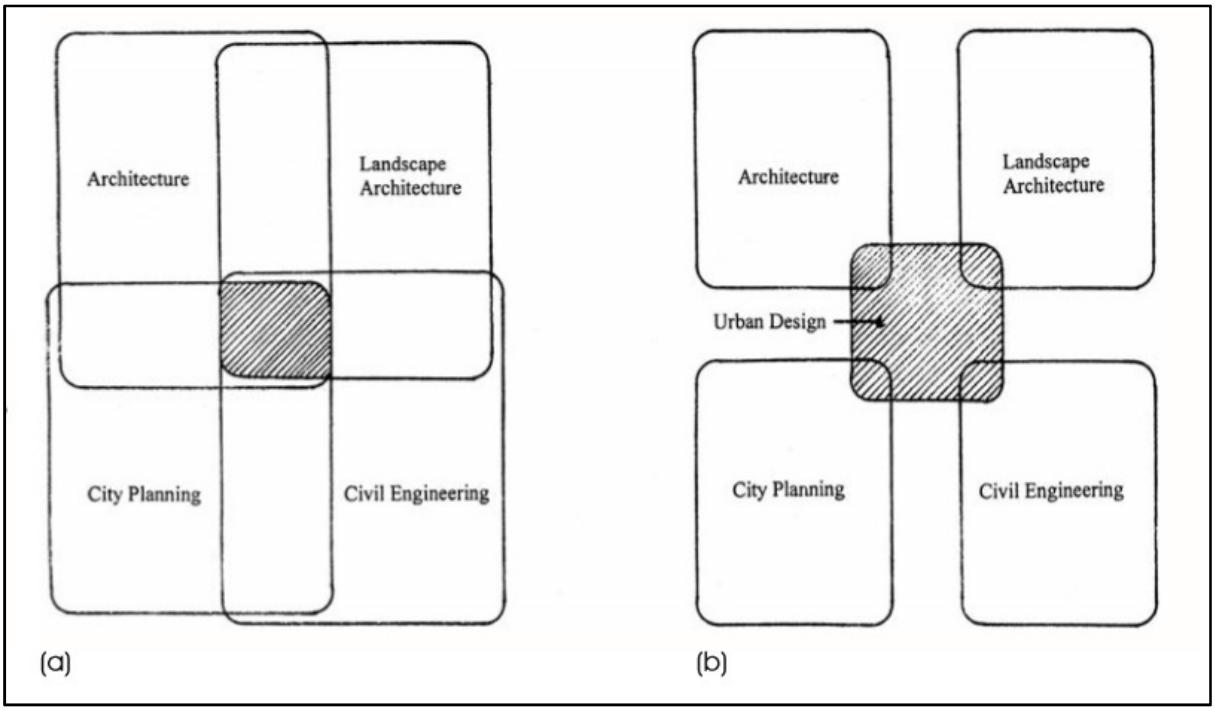


**Figure 2.1 - a) The traditional view; and b) Urban design today (Lang, 2017, p. 20)**

Of course, architecture, landscape architecture, city planning and civil engineering do not stand alone as professions which are important to urban design. Figure 2.2 shows how other generic professional and related roles are considered just as important within the field of urban design.

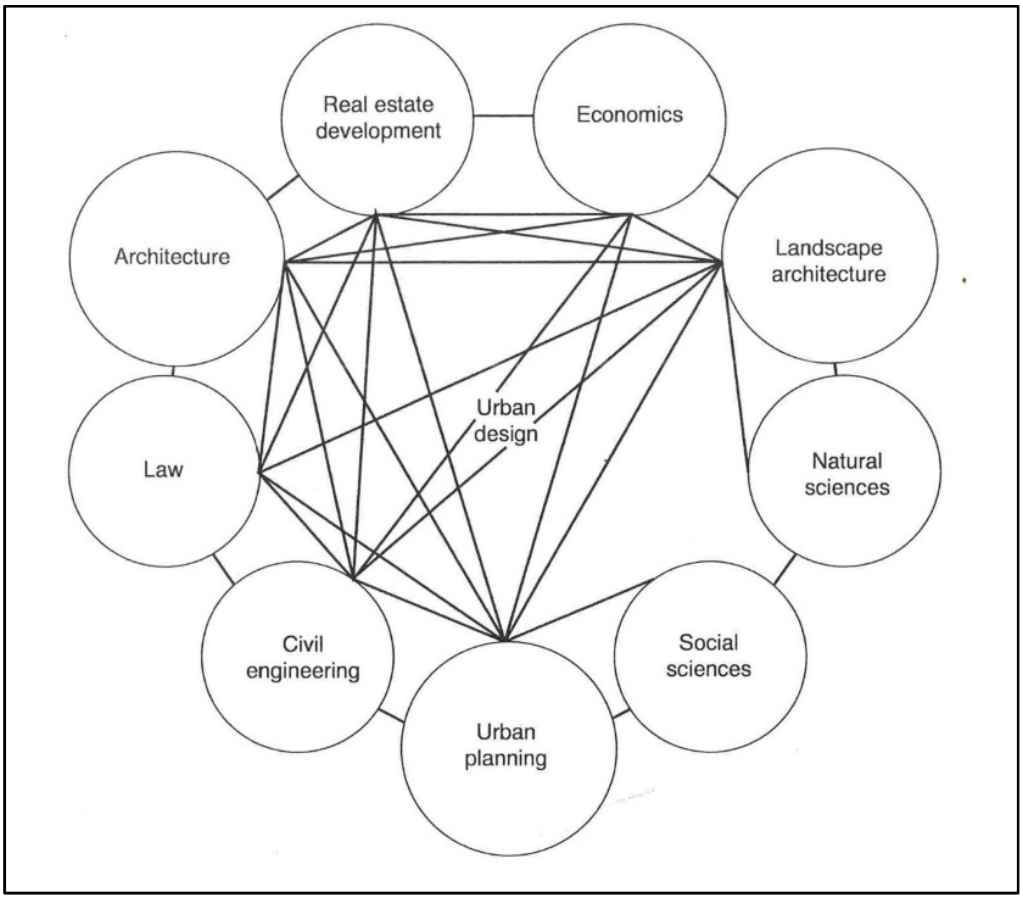


**Figure 2.2 – The professional and related roles in urban design (Schurch, 1999, p. 25)**

What Figure 2.2 above tells us is that urban design is the integration of different professions and/or disciplines, with each exploring and addressing a wide range of aspects of the built and social environments of cities. One could also consider that no matter how each profession attempts to define urban design, there would be some general consensus on the basic components and fundamental principles that underpin it. With this in mind, Boyko et al (2005) defined urban design as "the art and process of designing, creating, making and managing spaces and places for people" (p. 119). Two things become apparent from this definition; one urban design is creative and somewhat unique to each situation; and secondly it is a process. Furthermore, this definition is very similar in context to Stein's definition of urban design in 1960, being "the art of relating structures to one another and to their natural setting to serve contemporary living (cited in Lang, 2017, p. 1). Although both these definitions are brief, they lend themselves to not only what urban design is, but what it strives to achieve.

In contrast, Gerner (2002) considered that urban design, by its very nature, did not lend itself to brief definitions, and allowed the "endless manipulation of static and dynamic elements in accordance with the prevailing cultural values of the time" (p. 26). The static elements include buildings, roads, public spaces and the landscape, with the dynamics being people and their movements, modes of transport, the elements (sun, wind, water) and infrastructure networks. However, Gerner (2002) did conclude that "the viewpoint of static and dynamic elements is both brief and true, but the picture provided does not inform one of the natures and role of urban design" (p. 26).

So, can we assume that despite its popularity in professional literature and education, there has been no change in how we define urban design today? Take New Zealand as an example. Urban design is defined within the New Zealand Urban Design Protocol (MfE, 2005a):

> *"Urban design is concerned with the design of the buildings, places, spaces and networks that make up our towns and cities, and the ways people use them. It ranges in scale from a metropolitan region, city or town down to a street, public space or even a single building. Urban design is concerned not just with appearances and built form but with the environmental, economic, social and cultural consequences of design. It is an approach that draws together many different sectors and professions, and it includes both the process of decision-making as well as the outcomes of design" (p. 7).*

This is an inclusive definition that captures the multi-dimensional nature of urban design. It addresses both the public and private domains of spaces and embraces the social and physical dimensions of the urban environment. However, the inclusiveness of this definition has both strengths and weaknesses. Urban design creates relationships amongst things that might otherwise be considered separate, and the holistic nature reflects the multi-faceted nature of urban areas

themselves, where many problems and potentials are interconnected. However, the risk then is that urban design becomes all-encompassing, and lacks focus, substance or bite (MfE, 2005b).

Urban design, as a field of professional endeavour, draws on the expertise of a number of traditional and non-traditional design fields. It has become more development and socially oriented, and more conscious of the political economy in which it is embedded (Lang, 2017). Combined with the volatile nature of decision making in the political arena, this has led to a number of professionals with a committed interest in urban design slowly developing their own empirical knowledge base as the need for improving outcomes evolves.

## 2.4 The value of good urban design

New Zealand's colonial towns and cities were originally laid out with an eye to how they could promote public pride and prosperity (MfE, 2002). The majority of our urban development has occurred in a low density, car orientated manner, with a focus on suburban, family lifestyle without too much consideration to urban design. As mentioned already, our towns and cities are more complex, and face many challenges to their liveability and economic vitality (MfE, 2002). To a large extent, urban design and its values have to respond and work within what already exists, or 'retrofit' existing built environments.

During the early part of the 21st century, the MfE, under a Labour government, were actively encouraging better urban design under the Sustainable Development Programme of Action launched in 2003 (Higgins, 2010). Key components of this national initiative included urban design research and reports, case studies, review of urban design case law and toolkits. Two of the key urban design documents to be published; *People, Places, Spaces*; and the *New Zealand Urban Design Protocol* are discussed further below.

### People, Spaces and Places

A key task of the MfE's 2002 design guide – *'People, Spaces and Places'* is to improve awareness of what urban design is and how it can add value. These values include (p. 14):

- A better setting for all people who live in or visit;
- Gives private developments a marketing edge over competitors;
- Helps individual developments and neighbourhoods hold and increase their economic value;
- Increases the economic competitiveness of towns and cities by making them more efficient places to work and do business in, by reducing transport costs, and supporting more intensive use of land and space;

- Underpins the competitiveness of a city by helping to create high-quality living environments that attract and retain skilled people;
- Supports more transport choices;
- Addressing issues such as climate change, energy efficiency and biodiversity;
- Making urban areas more socially inclusive and safe, with less crime and other social problems;
- Helps to provide healthier homes that are warmer and more useable, and healthier lifestyles through local areas being attractive for walking and cycling to work, for leisure or health; and
- Reducing and avoiding adverse effects of urban areas on ecological resources, such as less air and water pollution and more efficient use of resources like land and water.

Ensuring New Zealand's urban areas are great places for people, to live, work and play is the underlying challenge. The guide outlines both urban design and process principles to achieve good urban outcomes and support sustainable development.

## New Zealand Urban Design Protocol

The New Zealand Urban Design Protocol (NZUDP) was published by the MfE in 2005, providing a platform to make New Zealand towns and cities more successful through quality urban design. It is a voluntary commitment by central and local government, the property sector, design professionals, professional institutes and other groups to create quality urban design and to undertake specific urban design initiatives. The NZUDP (p. 5) recognises that:

- Towns and cities are complex systems that require integrated management;
- Quality urban design is an essential component of successful towns and cities;
- Urban design needs to be an integral part of all urban decision-making;
- Urban design requires alliances across sectors and professionals;
- Urban design applies at all scales, from small towns to large cities;
- Urban design has a significant influence on people and how they live their lives; and
- Our towns and cities are important expressions of New Zealand's cultural identity including our unique Maori heritage.

To achieve the above, the Protocol is underpinned by seven essential design qualities (the 7 C's):

1. **Context**: Seeing that buildings, places and spaces are part of the whole town or city;
2. **Character**: Reflecting and enhancing the distinctive character, heritage and identity of our urban environment;
3. **Choice**: Ensuring diversity and choice for people;
4. **Connections**: Enhancing how different networks link together for people;

5. **Creativity**: Encouraging innovative and imaginative solutions;
6. **Custodianship**: Ensuring design is environmentally sustainable, safe and healthy;
7. **Collaboration**: Communicating and sharing knowledge across sectors, professions and with communities.

The Christchurch City Council (CCC) was a foundation signatory of the NZUDP, committing to make Christchurch "more successful through quality urban design" (CCC, n.d.-b). While non-statutory, the Protocol provides a mandate for at least the consideration of high-quality urban design. Signatories to the Protocol include public and private sector organisations and agencies who have substantive influence on the legislative and strategic framework that guides local authority policy as well as on the ground implementation (Schroder, 2012). The Protocol also aims to provide a greater collective understanding of what high quality design outcomes are, and the value that is added by encouraging them in practice, and how they may be achieved. However, Bruggan (2018) argues that "although it was considered to be an important step in changing the design quality of our environment, it lacked an implementation strategy and budget to match its ambition" (p. 36), largely because of its legislative context – notably the RMA. Nonetheless, the NZUDP was the 'heart beat' of the national strategy (Higgins, 2010), and part of a growing framework of policy guidance around quality urban design.

### Summary

What's important to remember is that urban design is not just for urban designers – it is for all people with an interest in urban areas – from the community, iwi, sector and professional groups, developers, bankers, academics, planners and engineers to name some. It attempts to encourage collaboration between cross-disciplinary groups and processes – the challenge is continuing to improve awareness of what urban design is and how it can add value.

## 2.5 Challenges to good urban design

We have discussed the importance of establishing good urban design values to support the overall economic, environmental and cultural values of cities. However, such a position of prominence also brings forward a number of challenges.

### Economic and political considerations

There is a danger that economic considerations become the main drivers of urban development, giving priority to particular sectors at the expense of others. For example, neoliberalism, which Bahmanteymouri (2019) believes, "champions economic incentives and free markets over government controls. He further states that these free markets" have shaped and framed society and reduced planning to a tool to sustain capital accumulation in urban areas". Neoliberalists view the

role of the state as creating and preserving an institutional framework that is appropriate to private property rights, unencumbered markets and free trade (Harvey, 2007), and is a significant form of free-market economic theory which is used as justification for government reform (Peck and Tickell, 2002).

This means that in New Zealand, the focus has been on planning that attracts financial capital and highly qualified people into big cities, through good urban design and producing a high-quality built environment. In turn, these cities have made huge contributions to their countries' gross domestic product and, with their focus on urban design and beautification, were marketed and sold at the highest prices in the global market (Bahmanteymouri, 2019). This was considered an indicator of high economic growth and a successful economy. But while all this economic growth was focused on urban planning for higher income groups, other groups were ignored and somewhat forgotten, such as the lower to middle income groups. The neoliberal idea that a free market automatically fixes unbalances and provides wellbeing for everyone has therefore been misinterpreted (Bahmanteymouri, 2019).

This is supported by Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern, who said that "neoliberalism, a political model that favours the free market and minimal state intervention, has failed", adding "my view is that New Zealand has been served well by interventionist governments. It is about making sure that your market serves your people. It's a poor master but a good servant" (as cited in Bahmanteymouri, 2019). Therefore, the challenge is how do we strike a balance, so as to achieve a particular aim but not at the expense of others. As Madanipour (2006) questions, "Where is urban design located in this process, and whose interests and values does it safeguard?" (p. 20). By no means is urban design limited to the development market or local authorities. It sets a framework that supports the overall liveability of a space for everyone, while trying to balance the economic, environmental, cultural and social values that define it.

## Regulation

There is also a danger that top-down solutions are adopted in managing cities, driven by elitist assumptions and bureaucratic dynamics, rather than by real economic or social needs (Madanipour, 2006). The Canterbury earthquake sequence resulted in around 80% of buildings in the central city being demolished. The city would likely see an unprecedented number of new buildings being constructed over the next ten years, and as Nicholson (2014) believed, "the risk of poor urban design outcomes is significantly higher than in other New Zealand cities" (p. 14).

The use of urban design regulations as part of land use planning is a common trend amongst cities throughout Australia, Canada, United States and the United Kingdom. Three kinds of regulation are

used within Christchurch; information requirements which raise the level of understanding of the urban context of development proposals, and what needs to be addressed; prescriptive plan rules generally related to bulk and location; and assessment matters which target quality. Nicholson (2014) further acknowledges that urban design regulation should not be concerned with any particular architectural style, but with improving the public realm and protecting the amenity of the built environment for the occupants and general public – "Buildings that are not great architecture can still provide good urban outcomes" (p. 13).

Regulation is required to avoid the adverse effects of poorly designed developments on the urban environment and on urban communities (Nicholson, 2014). However, any regulation needs to be balanced against the rights of landowners to use and develop their land. Urban design regulations that prevent land from being used reasonably and economically do not benefit cities or the urban environment. What we need to be mindful of is not creating a situation where the planning framework is building unnecessary frustration amongst the development community with overly prescriptive rules and policies that start to hinder processes.

## The property developer

We know that urban design, as a field of professional endeavour, draws on the expertise of a number of professions. However, where does the property developer fit within all of this? Rowley (1998) states:

> *"urban design practitioners and scholars alike have tended to shy away from examining this [property development] critical aspect of their work, sometimes in the erroneous belief that it was beyond their field of concern but possibly fearing that it was beyond their comprehension" (p. 152).*

Private property developers exert a powerful influence on the property industry (Rowley, 1998), and somewhat the quality of urban design of their developments. That said, Lang (1994) acknowledges that:

> *"The position that many urban designers take is that understanding the nature of land development processes is outside their domain of interest. ... This lack of understanding reduces their role in creating the future city and places them at the whim of the development community" (as cited in Rowley, 1998, p. 152).*

Property developers play a critical role in the development cycle. They face a number of tasks, sometimes challenging, from; market research, acquiring property, finance, consent approvals (both planning and building), design and costings, construction, marketing and the eventual sale of the end

product. Not only do they manage these tasks, they also resolve the varied, often conflicting, objectives of all the parties involved in the development process (Rowley, 1998). But more importantly, not only does the developer bear the immediate responsibility for the financial success or failure of a project; they are ultimately responsible for the quality and appearance of a development.

Rowley (1998) states that although design is only one aspect of a complex process, developers see all aspects of design as essentially a means to a financial end and not as an end in itself. General considerations around design includes (but not limited to):

- future occupier requirements;
- flexibility in building design and layout to meet changing needs;
- buildability and materials to be used;
- cost efficiency and value for money; and
- visual impact including the 'image' of the completed development for saleability.

One challenge for developers is to influence the design process in a way which maximises their own goals without stifling their designers' creativity and performance (Buckley, 1990, as cited in Rowley, 1998). Designers seldom consciously consider more than a limited set of the potential functions that the built environment can serve in their designs (Lang, 2017), given they are influenced by budget, and the world is too complex for every function of built form to be considered simultaneously (Rowley, 1998). The other challenge associated with design is quantifying the benefits from quality urban design. While it may be easy to cost a development, it is harder to place a value on what are often intangible qualities, all the more so if a particular solution is innovative (Rowley, 1998). This puts the onus back on the developer to make decision that may or may not result in a return on investment in design quality. For this reason, good designers can have a significant influence on property developers (Lang, 2017), helping to convince them of the added value, albeit if this involves additional cost up front.

## Summary

As political, economic and cultural changes continue to shape cities, the urban fabric is also evolving to accommodate these new conditions. As Madanipour (2006) states “in its broadest terms, urban design is the tool of this reshaping, hence its structural significance” (p. 23). However, the most important challenge that urban design faces is at the intersection of producers, regulators and users (Madanipour (2006). Each group’s interests and expectations are increasingly at odds with each other, with rising tensions and incompatibilities around the notion of urban design.

## 2.6 The rising significance of urban design review

It has taken a long time for urban design to establish a significant role in planning practice in developed countries (Punter 2007). Although White (2015) traces the idea of facilitating better quality urban environments through the use of an approval process back to the 1960s in New York, it wasn't until the 1970s when plans and review processes were notably established in San Francisco, Portland and Vancouver (Punter, 2003).

Vancouver, often referred to as a 'city by design' established its UDP in 1973, and has been a key component of the city's planning system. Members of the panel included architects, engineers, industry people and landscape architects. The Panel reviews and advises Council on development proposals, re-zoning and civic projects of public interest. The Panel does not approve or refuse projects, but are an integral component in the approval pipeline. In recent years, the panel has transcended its advisory role to essentially become a peer review system, where designers and developers seek approval. The key to its success is the quality of the panel, the design critique, the independence of the advice and its ability to support innovation and design flare (Punter, 2003).

In Europe, design concerns have a much longer history. The Dutch were widely regarded as having the most sophisticated and practical model of aesthetic advisory committees (Punter, 2003). The Netherlands committee for aesthetic control comprised independent design experts commissioned by the municipality, and were charged with advising the Council on applications for development permits. These design experts included architects, city planners, landscape architects, historians and environmental psychologists. However, just as the Dutch model was being promoted to other European countries as an exemplar, it "fell victim to pressures for deregulation of planning practices promoted by the Dutch development industry" (Punter, 2003, p. 114). Further to this, although the value added by the committee was recognised, they were continually criticised for the lack of design criteria in which their decisions were based on. They also lacked transparency and were detached from local authority processes (Punter, 2003).

The United Kingdom adopted a different informal system of Architectural Advisory Panels, operating under the professional aegis of the Royal Institute of British Architects. They had no legal basis and were only endorsed from time to time by Central Government (Punter, 2003). In 2002, there was a restructure of the national design review panel, and a number of regional panels formed by CABE, who aimed to make the process more systematic and transparent (Punter, 2003).

During preparations for the Sydney 2000 Olympic Games, it was recognised that Australia's reputation was at risk if infrastructure and facilities failed to measure up to the spirit of the games (Keniger, 2017). This led to robust process being implemented to ensure high quality design centred

around a thorough design review process. Keniger (2017) notes that the panels mandate was to "provide vigilance and advice concerning the quality and coherence of urban and architectural design for Olympic locations, venues and facilities" (p. 38). Following on from the efforts of this panel, and others that were set up post-Olympic Games, the use of design review processes in Australia became an integral part of planning policies and controls. In New South Wales, there was growing concern around the design quality of multi-unit residential development. This resulted in the introduction of design review panels in 2002, comprising independent experts of architects, planners and those with related disciplines, who advised on design standards to assist in strengthening the planning approval process (Keniger, 2017).

A number of urban design panels, of varying structures and operational methods, have been established in New Zealand, largely within the main urban areas (MfE, 2010b). There are two types of urban design panels in New Zealand:

- An independent panel of external experts; and
- An in-house panel of external experts who function as a 'design clinic'

The MfE (2010b) considered that expert panels were having a positive effect on built outcomes, either by improving the standard of design or eliminating poorly designed proposals from further consideration. This is supported by Moore et al (2015), who interviewed a number of building industry stakeholders in Sydney and Melbourne to better understand the value and use of urban design review panels. Although the responses varied based on roles, they concluded that:

- Developers generally saw benefit in the design review process through expert advice and more direction;
- For architects, the process acted as a support network and helped them find better outcomes on challenging sites; and
- For local authorities, it ensured a higher quality design outcome, particularly relating to design elements of spaces around buildings

However, despite the continued advocacy for quality urban design outcomes in New Zealand, there are still few evaluations of the urban design review process and outcomes. As Haarhoff et al (2017) state, "most current evaluations have focused on the efficiency of the Design Review process, but what remains is a lack of evidence that connect more directly Urban Design Review processes to enhancement of the built environment, and importantly, what part this plays among other enhancement tools" (p. 10).

## 2.7 Urban design review – regulatory or advisory?

Urban design review is a peer review process or critique for the design of built form projects, and as Carmona (2018) suggests, "it is an increasingly prominent feature in the design governance toolbox typically offered as a public service" (p. 3). Two models of design review exist – regulatory and advisory. A regulatory system, such as the United States, is typically a formal tool of design governance, in that it is sanctioned in statute with a formal regulatory role (Carmona, 2017). This system can lead to the potential for design review to be considered arbitrary, biased, subjective, vague, and superficial (Carmona, 2018). However, if you look beyond its narrow, regulatory function, Schuster (2005) considered that a regulatory model of design review can act in many ways: "like a jury, a peer panel review, a building inspector, a mediator, an expert decision-maker, a facilitator, a planning consultant and as an educator" (as cited in Carmona, 2018). Carmona (2018) further states, "the link between design review and formal regulatory processes is less clear cut, with design review being used more as a formative critique as opposed to a summative evaluation" (p. 2).

In contrast, panels such as those in New Zealand have been used as an advisory role: providing early and constructive advice to developers on specific proposals, advise their respective local authorities on policy and guidance framework, and most importantly to champion good design for the community (Wood, 2014). The UK has also continued along a similar path, remaining informal and outside of the statutory regulatory frameworks. Design review in this setting is an evaluation tool focused on improving the design quality of developments before formal regulatory consent is granted (Carmona, 2018).

Carmona et al (2010) believe that this formal or informal review process has directed us towards a conceptual distinction – whether the evaluation of design quality in planning happens in an integrated or separated manner. In the separated model, the decision-making process is deliberately split from other planning functions, with a statutory body – a design review panel, formulating a binding recommendation to the planning authority, or provides a consent itself (Carmona, 2018). The issue with this model is consideration of designs is reduced to mere aesthetics (Scheer, 1994, as cited in Carmona, 2018), with potential shortcomings around connecting design with other development constraints such as zoning, density or specific planning rules. Carmona (2018) further suggests, this throws the legitimacy of the process into question.

Decision-making within an integrated model forms part of the wider planning process. In New Zealand for example, decisions on whether designs are acceptable are made by the local authority planning staff. They can seek advice from an independent review panel, but are ultimately responsible for weighing up and balancing advice received on other factors before determining an appropriate outcome (Carmona, 2018). Therefore, design review in this model has no formal status,

and developers have no obligation to present their proposals for scrutiny to a panel of independent experts. However, planners more often than not use the design review advice to support or add further weight to their own decisions. The danger associated with this model is, as Carmona (2018) suggests, is that design becomes a spectator, and is sometimes barely considered at all.

## 2.8 Principles of urban design review

Design review is focused on outcomes for people, seeking to constructively improve the quality of our built environment (Design Council, 2013). To be effective, it must be resourced appropriately and conducted in a manner that is fair, robust and credible. However, like any review process, there needs to be a framework or principles that set out the standards of advice and the service that panels should adopt, and their users can expect.

Academics and practitioners have developed a number of critiques on design review practices (Punter, 2007), mainly in America but also the United Kingdom. Lai (1988) studied a number of review processes in New York and San Francisco, developing a useful set of review practice recommendations (as cited in Punter, 2007). Likewise, Schuster (1990) and Scheer (1994) researched the experience of design review by planners and architects in the United States, transforming this into a trenchant critique (Punter, 2007) and later emphasising a number of problems including power and aesthetics. Punter (2007) integrates these critiques, developing a set of twelve principles as set out Figure 2.3 below:

**Principles for Progressive Urban Design Review**

**Community Vision**

1. Committing to a comprehensive and coordinated vision of environmental beauty and design (Brennan's Law) (Lai, 1988, p. 426).
2. Developing and monitoring an urban design plan with community and development industry support and periodic review (Lai, 1988, p. 429).

**Design, Planning and Zoning**

3. Harnessing the broadest range of actors and instruments (tax, subsidy, land acquisition) to promote better design (Lai, 1988, p. 430–431).
4. Mitigating the exclusionary effects of control strategies and urban design regulation (Lai, 1988, p. 430)
5. Integrating zoning into planning and addressing the limitations of zoning (Lai, 1988, pp. 431–432).

**Broad, Substantive Design Principles**

6. Maintaining a commitment to urban design that goes well beyond elevations and aesthetics to embrace amenity, accessibility, community, vitality and sustainability (Scheer, 1994, p. 9).
7. Basing guidelines on generic design principles and contextual analysis and articulating desired and mandatory outcomes (Blaesser, 1994, p. 50).
8. Not attempting to control all aspects of community design but accommodating organic spontaneity, vitality, innovation, pluralism: not over-prescriptive (Lai, 1988, p. 428; Blaesser, 1994, p. 50)

**Due Process**

9. Identifying clear *a priori* roles for urban design intervention (Lai, 1988, p. 425; Scheer, 1994, pp. 6–7).
10. Establishing proper administrative procedures with written opinions to manage administrative discretion, and with appropriate appeal mechanisms (Lai, 1988, 427; Scheer, 1994, pp. 3–4).
11. Implementing an efficient, constructive and effective permitting process (Scheer, 1994, pp. 5–6, 7).
12. Providing appropriate design skills and expertise to support the review process (Scheer, 1994, pp. 4–5; Lai, 1988, p. 431).

**Figure 2.3 - Principles for Progressive Urban Design Review (Punter, 2007, p. 171)**

The above principles provide a basis for evaluating, reforming or developing review processes, also forming the basis for international frameworks. Whilst they are specific around aesthetics and planning to some degree, they are less detailed on the actual role of design review. Furthermore, these principles don't really fit the 'mould' of current design review practices, particularly in New Zealand. One could argue that they are more suited to a regulatory model of design review, based on principles ten and eleven referencing 'appeal mechanisms' and 'effective permitting process'.

The following 'best practice' principles of design review were formulated by the Commission of Architecture and the Built Environment (CABE) in 2009 to ensure design review panels worked in a consistent way (Design Council, 2013). The ten design review principles are (Design Council, 2013, p. 7):

- Independent – ensures there are no conflicts of interest;
- Expert – carried out by suitably qualified people;
- Multidisciplinary – different perspectives of specialists;

- Accountable – advice is seen to clearly work for the benefit of the public;
- Transparent – the panels governance should always be in the public domain;
- Proportionate – used on projects that warrant the service;
- Timely – takes place early in the design process;
- Advisory – no decisions are made, rather impartial advice;
- Objective – appraises schemes based on reasoned and objective criteria; and
- Accessible – findings and advice are clearly expressed for all to understand

As stated at the outset, the design review process is focused on outcomes, and principles such as the above seek to ensure an independent and impartial evaluation process, offering consistently high standards in the quality of its advice (Design Council, 2013). Each country develops its own design review process, with varying priorities generally influenced by cultural conditions, local politics of the development process and in particular the sheer power of the market. However, incorporating the review process into a planning system can be challenging, with the key issue being where to start and with what level of intervention (Punter, 2007).

## 2.9 Conclusion

As the literature suggests, urban design has 're-surfaced' as a critical component to improving the built environment of our cities. However, despite its popularity amongst the literature, it is still somewhat mis-leading, with no standard definition and is often used and defined directly by the varying groups who use it. What we do know is that the urban design process begins long before development proposals are thought up, and these in turn build upon a very long history that continues to inform processes of change through to today.

New Zealand has experienced a growing framework of policy guidance around quality urban design, with design review being adopted by local authorities around the Country as a means to encourage better and more positive design outcomes. Although the 'line-up' of stakeholders, leadership and the power relationships can be different, good design outcomes remain the common and constant means through which proposals are considered and critiqued over time, with problems – financial, regulatory and markets typically requiring re-design in order to move things forward. This clearly highlights that the design and development process is iterative and integrated in nature.

However, it is evident from the literature review that there is still a lack of evidence and/or evaluation that connects the design review process and the value it adds to the built environment, a knowledge gap identified within this research. This will be the true measure of the influence of design review on the built environment.

# Chapter 3

# Research Methods

This chapter sets out the methodology adopted to guide this research. Using a case study, semi-structured interviews and document analysis, data has been collected and examined. A description of these methods is provided, and the ethical considerations of this research acknowledged.

## 3.1 Methodology Overview

This research will use a qualitative approach, with the aim of drawing together information widely distributed amongst varying sources. The value in qualitative data relates to gaining explanations of facts and also the relationships between variables (Flick, 2006), and providing the researcher the opportunity to understand how people view the world around them (Aurini, Heath, & Howells, 2016).

To ensure the research is robust and comprehensive, it is important to continually move between the existing knowledge base and theory and what has been observed in the research (Flick 2006). A combination of research methods has been used including a review of the relevant literature, an assessment of a case study area and analysis of primary and secondary data. Primary data was collected through interviews, while secondary data was collected through the case study and reviewing relevant documents and material associated with the research area.

## 3.2 Literature Review

Literature reviews allow researchers to understand the current state of the topic in question, with a purpose of setting the scene in which the research is to be undertaken (Frankfort-Nachmias and Nachmias, 1996). The literature review in Chapter 2 has identified important concepts from theory of urban design, the values and challenges and the rising significance of design review. This has helped shape the overall aim of the research and the questions identified to help in addressing this aim. The literature and research will be used to address the gaps identified and determine what influence, if any, the urban design panel is having on residential development within the central city.

## 3.3 Case Study Methodology

To assist with understanding the research areas, a case study approach has been adopted. Case study research allows for an in-depth study of a given phenomenon in its real-world context (Yin, 2018, p. 127)). It allows the researcher to explore individuals or organizations, simple through complex interventions, relationships, communities, or programs (Yin, 2003). Yin (2018) explains how case

studies can facilitate exploration of themes enabling the creation of new knowledge and can also assist in problem solving.

Although case studies as a research method have traditionally been viewed as lacking rigor and objectivity when compared to other forms of research methods (Rowley, 2002), they are still widely used and offer in-sights that may not be achieved through alternative approaches. Rowley (2002) also considers that case studies are a useful tool for the "preliminary, exploratory stage of a research project…" (p. 16) and are useful in providing answers to how, what and why questions (Crowe et al, 2011).

Case study research can be based around both qualitative and quantitative approaches, and typically use a number of sources including observations, interviews and documents (Rowley, 2002). By applying the case study approach to the posed research questions in relation to the role and influence of the Christchurch UDP, comprehensive data can be collected from a given context which has been directly impacted by the case study area. Selecting the case study areas is critical, and must be determined by the research question(s), purpose and theoretical context (Rowley, 2002). Other factors that may impact on case study selection include accessibility, resources available and time.

Central city Christchurch was selected as the case study area to better understand the role and influence of the UDP. The central city has had a number of challenges post-Canterbury earthquake sequence; political agendas, fluctuating population and housing market, changes to the planning framework, and the various personalities and attitudes towards urban design. The case study research utilised document analysis and semi-structured interviews. This allowed for triangulation of data and improved the research's validity (Flick, 2009). This is supported by Crowe et al (2011) who outline the strength of engaging with a number of data collection methods in order to undertake in-depth analysis of a case study.

## 3.4 Secondary Data Collection

For this research, relevant material relating to urban design, urban design review and the use of urban design panels were collated and critiqued to better inform interviews and develop a greater understanding of the research topic. These documents include the New Zealand Urban Design Protocol, the Terms of Reference for the Christchurch UDP and regulatory and non-regulatory planning documents that affect development within the central city. This secondary data collection added greater understanding and depth to this research.

## 3.5 Semi-Structured Interviews

Interviews are a common method in collecting primary data as part of qualitative research. They provide a useful avenue to directly interact and discuss the chosen topic with people who are likely to have knowledge about the subject (Robson, 2011).

An interview, as defined by Gillham (2000), is where an interviewer is able to control the situation as they seek answers from an interviewee for a particular purpose. As part of this research, semi-structured interviews were used to not only add more depth in understanding the role of the urban design panel in Christchurch, but to understand the thoughts and views from varying stakeholders who have either used the service or are involved in the industry. Flick (2006) emphasises that semi-structured interviews are more flexible and openly designed than a more formal interview or questionnaire, and gives the interviewee a chance to talk without any strict regulation or predefined answer.

Interview participants were identified based on their involvement with the urban design panel, residential development within the central city and their own professional background. The participants ranged from urban designers, architects, planners, surveyors and property developers. A research information sheet along with the questions was provided to the participants prior to the interview, and formed the basis for further discussion to be built on. Copies of these have been included as Appendix A. The interviews were conducted within the month of March 2020 at varying locations that suited the participant. Each was asked to complete a consent form to permit recording of the interview and the use of the data within this research. A copy of the consent form is included within Appendix B. Each interview was no longer than an hour, and where necessary, clarification was sought to ensure a full understanding of the participants view. Interviews were digitally recorded and transcribed for data analysis.

All but one of the participants were happy to be identified within this research. However, given my background in the research topic I have decided not to use their names. Instead, the interviewees quoted in this dissertation will be known as:

- Planner 1;
- Urban designer 1;
- Panel member 1;
- Panel member 2;
- Developer 1; and
- Developer 2

## 3.6 Data Analysis

A large quantity of primary and secondary data has been collected, which raises the question of what to include and exclude from this research, and how to ensure a limited loss of authenticity from the interview data that is "justifiable through an acceptable degree of neglect of certain aspects" (Flick, 2006, p. 108). Therefore, data analysis followed the process set out by Wellington and Szczerbinski (2007), being immersion; reflecting; taking apart/analysing data; recombining/synthesising data; relating and locating your data; knowing when to stop and presenting the data. Immersion happened first at the literature review, and once the interviews were completed and transcribed, I was able review all the data as a whole.

Themes and different perspectives started to become clear which is where the use of thematic analysis can assist. This is a widely used process whereby researchers identify recurring themes or patterns in qualitative data (Guest et al, 2012). The advantage of thematic analysis is the flexibility in its application and the ability to assist in achieving a more detailed account of data (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Coding was undertaken to identify key terms, followed by collating these terms into key themes.

To reach the main points made through this research, the data from the interviews was triangulated with the literature in Chapter 2 and the secondary data in Chapter 4. Aurini et al (2016) describe, triangulating data sources is as a way of adding credibility to research findings by providing different kinds of evidence and understanding to the area under consideration.

## 3.7 Ethical Considerations

Ethics approval was sought from Lincoln University's Human Ethics Committee. The approval letter is attached as Appendix C.

A research information sheet and set of questions was emailed to potential participants in order to gauge interest from those willing to participate. Informed consent was also sought from all participants. As Aurini et al (2016) discusses, obtaining informed consent reassures participants that their involvement is voluntary, and that they can stay anonymous and have the opportunity to review any quotations that are attributed to them. As part of this research, all participants were treated the same, and referred to their role in the development cycle.

## 3.8 Limitations

Any research has its limitations. Firstly, the global pandemic COVID-19. A four-level alert system was introduced on 21 March 2020 to manage the outbreak within New Zealand. This has had an unprecedented impact on New Zealand, affecting everyone differently. Beginning at 11:59pm on 25

March 2020, the alert level was moved to level four, putting the country into a nationwide lockdown. During this lockdown, people and communities had to adhere to strict rules and guidelines, and adopt drastic social change.

Secondly, this research may not be as complete as it could be due to two participants being unable to be interviewed. Interviews had been 'pencilled in' prior to the Level 4 lockdown, and an attempt was made to contact the participants after this but no response was received. Having a relatively short window of opportunity to complete this research, and not knowing the pressures and/or circumstances behind the remaining participants, I made the decision to not seek anyone further in order to complete my analysis

Finally, time was a limiting factor in this research. Balancing the requirements of this dissertation with family commitments, working full time and the global pandemic provided its fair share of challenges.

However, given these constraints, I am confident in the robustness of my methods and the quality of data

## 3.9 Risks

As previously discussed in Chapter 1 above, I have acknowledged my work experience in the field of land development, and the potential for this to misrepresent my research. I have a working affiliation with a number of the interviewees and a wide knowledge of the case study area. Berger (2015) discusses that this prior experience and knowledge may influence what the interviewees are willing to share and can somewhat shape the research relationship. Myself and the participants interviewed are all respected professionals in their field of work, and I am confident that the information and thoughts provided are all within their capabilities. I have put my working career to one side and have approached this research with no preconceived ideas or answers, with the methodology guiding my position within this research. I have discussed this with my supervisor who has supported me throughout this research.

# Chapter 4

# Central City Christchurch

Fundamental to answering the research questions is to understand Christchurch's urban design agenda. The chapter starts with a brief historical overview of the central city, followed by the impact of the Canterbury earthquake sequence on the built environment. It concludes by highlighting the statutory and non-statutory framework urban design sits within the central city, providing further context for this research.

## 4.1 Historical overview of central city Christchurch

Christchurch officially became a city in 1856. Captain Joseph Thomas and his surveyors had a plan for Christchurch; the standard rectangular grid of colonial settlement, typical of contemporary approaches to urban design for new towns (Wilson, 2005).

Features of the layout included the Avon River which ran eccentrically through the area, and the diagonal streets of High Street/Ferry Road and Victoria Street/Papanui Road, which broke up the regularity of the grid (Wilson, 2005). At the centre of the city is the Square, and the site of the proposed cathedral and grammar school. East and north-west of the Square were two more 'squares' (Latimer and Cranmer Squares, albeit rectangles) which were placed more or less regularly in relation to the diagonal line of the Avon running in a north-easterly direction across the city to the west and north of the central Square. The grid was laid out originally between the boundaries of Barbadoes, St Asaph, Salisbury and Antigua Streets, and is still described today as an essential part of Christchurch's identity and character (Wilson, 2005).

The 1850's plan of Christchurch identifies three Town Reserves (Hagley Park was on the fourth side). These strips were set aside and sold for building after the first sections inside the original grid had been distributed (Wilson, 2015). The roads along these reserves were widened and planted with trees down the middle. These new 'four avenues' were named after former superintendents around 1904 to 1906, and still define the boundaries of the central city today (Wilson, 2015)

People in the inner city either lived in detached houses, both large and small, or small workers cottages. An early feature was the differentiation between areas east and west of the square – the west side becoming the more 'fashionable' area, with many of the homes on the east side eventually subdivided into flats. In the second half of the 20th century, how Christchurch developed was determined not by unrestrained economic and social forces, but by planning (Wilson, 2015). Planning was undertaken by both the territorial authorities and the regional planning bodies. Of particular

significance was the zoning of different parts of the city for different land uses or activities and the designation of a 'green belt' intended to restrain sprawl from the city into surrounding rural land. Figure 4.1 below shows the District Planning Scheme from 1962 which included these new regulatory mechanisms.

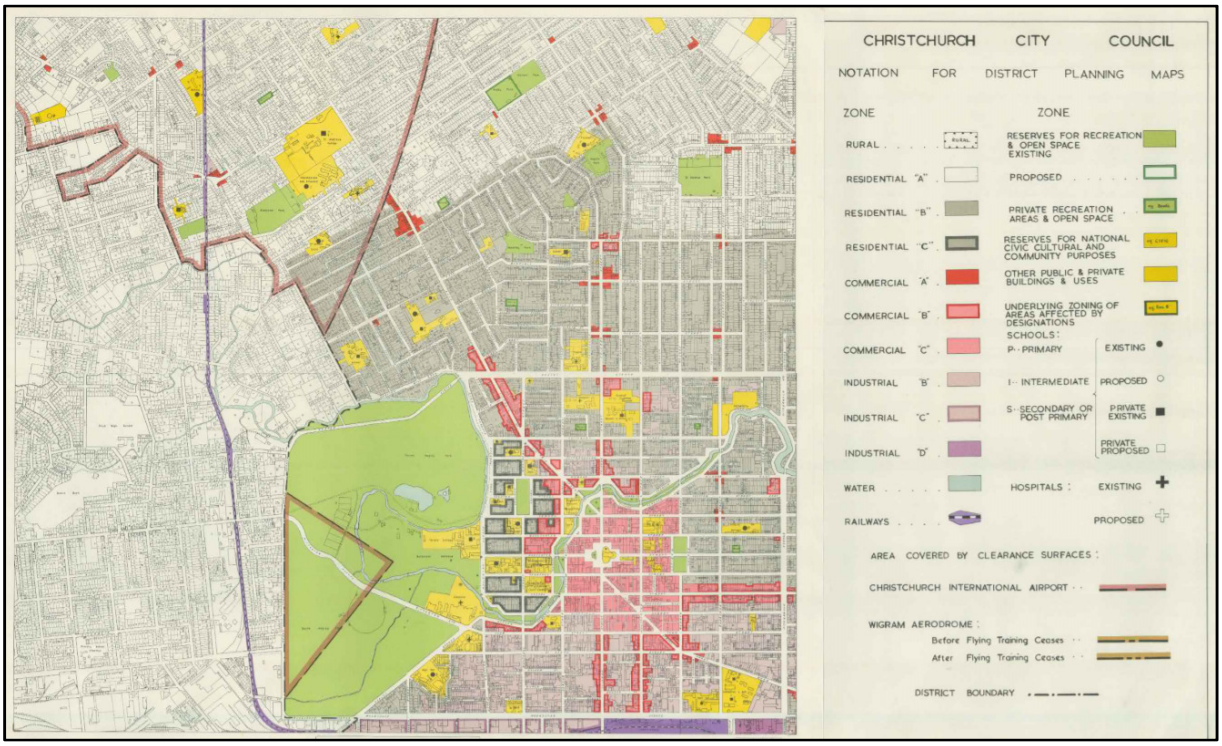


**Figure 4.1 – 1962 Planning map (CCC, n.d.-c)**

Like a number of cities and towns within New Zealand, the passing of the RMA in 1991 significantly changed the planning environment, and the city's development took new direction. Over the last two decades there has been a notable change in the type of housing developments, with the building of multi-unit blocks – including low, medium and high rise tending to dominant the city's residential landscape. But how development would look all changed in September 2010, through an unprecedented event that was about to see the diverse influences that shaped the city throughout its history set to influence its future.

## 4.2 The Canterbury earthquake sequence and its Impact on the central city

> *"… extraordinary measures would be needed to ensure that the city coped with the crisis and, in the longer term, was rebuilt (Wilson, 2013, p. 19).*

Central Christchurch has developed over 160 years into a commercial hub, with a working population of some 51,000 people prior to the Canterbury earthquake sequence (CERA, 2012), and home to many existing residential communities.

At 4:35am on 4 September 2010, a magnitude 7.1 earthquake struck the Canterbury Region. There was extensive damage as a result of the shaking, particularly to infrastructure and buildings. Fortunately, there were no deaths, and the local residents began the recovery process, albeit in between frequent aftershocks. Five months later, on 22 February 2011, a magnitude 6.3 aftershock occurred 5km south-east of Christchurch, at a depth of only 5km. This earthquake happened at lunchtime on a typical working day, causing catastrophic damage to the city, claiming 185 lives (CERA, 2012).

Prior to the Canterbury earthquake sequence, the estimated population of the central city at June 2010 was 8,280 (CCC, n.d.-d). In the period of June 2010 to June 2012, Christchurch's population declined 3.6%, the total housing stock was reduced by 6.2%, and the central city rental market plummeted 45% during the same period (CCC, n.d.-d).

Figure 4.2 shows the estimated residential population within the central city from 1996 to 2019.

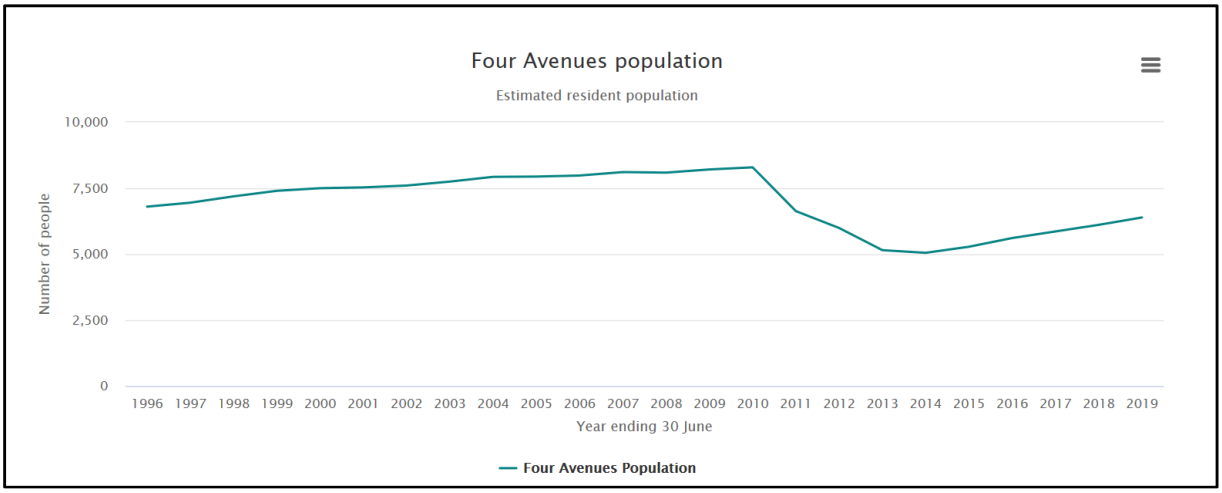


**Figure 4.2 – Population numbers within the four avenues population (CCC, n.d.-d)**

Re-building within the central city was always going to be challenging, and it soon became clear that a significant and collaborative effort would be needed to reinstate the city. In the context of this research, I consider there to be three key issues that hinder residential development. Firstly, the RMA. As discussed already, the RMA provides the legislative context for development of the built environment. It is outcomes focused, and proposals that are in conflict with local planning regulations need only demonstrate that negative effects are slight and therefore acceptable, or appropriate mitigation can be put in pace (Gjerde, 2016). It is a liberal framework for management of the country's resources and despite recent changes increasing the value of design matters, the RMA is still largely focused on the bio-physical realm.

Secondly, land issues. The stability of the land on which Christchurch is built on is a fundamental consideration. Significant changes to structural loading and building regulations recognise the risk

made obvious by the earthquakes. Further to this, the land remains prone to liquefaction, a condition sometimes difficult to predict and design for.

And lastly, construction costs and availability of finance to landowners and developers. Changes to building regulations to address seismic conditions ultimately led to higher costs for new projects. Even before the earthquakes, Christchurch was considered a marginal investment location because of diminishing returns in the city (Gjerde, 2016).

The shortage of housing post-earthquakes is slowly being addressed, with dwellings being re-built, repaired and a number of housing developments being completed. These developments comprise varying typologies of homes, from standalone townhouses to apartment style living, recognising the potential of the central city to be a vibrant urban neighbourhood. As of June 2019, the central city population reached an estimated 6,390 people (CCC, n.d.-d). No matter what happens, the Canterbury earthquake sequence has become one of the most significant events in the history of Christchurch since the city was founded in 1850 (Wilson, 2013). As the Christchurch Central Development Unit (CCDU) stated, "an important part of the story of the earthquakes in Christchurch is how the city coped through a transitional phase from recovery through to the return of a functioning central city".

## 4.3 The urban design 'blueprint' for recovery

> *"Rarely does a city find the opportunity to comprehensively reinvent itself…" (Gjerde, 2016, p. 530).*

As part of this research, it is useful to understand the nature of post-earthquake regulation (both statutory and non-statutory) in order to provide some context in which urban design sits.

Probably the most contentious matter was the level of central Government involvement. The government was spending taxpayer money and therefore wanted to maintain a level of control over its investment. In addition, it was considered that Christchurch City Council did not have the resources to deal with the rebuild. The government quickly passed emergency legislation and set up the Canterbury Earthquake Recovery Authority (CERA) to lead the recovery effort, and to serve as a point of contact between the central and local government. One of the main powers the government possessed in the rebuild process was to expedite development by bypassing usual consultation and approval processes, as well as creating new legislation to expedite development.

A number of planning frameworks were filtered down to be implemented at a local level to provide some form of guidance in assisting with redevelopment within the central city. Only those with some relevance to urban design are included below in the interests of brevity.

### 4.3.1 Greater Christchurch Urban Development Strategy 2007

The Greater Christchurch Urban Development Strategy (UDS) created in 2007 was considered a forward-looking document preparing our region for the future, cementing the partnership and collaborative approach for addressing issues that spanned council and political boundaries (Greater Christchurch Partnership [GCP], n.d.-a). The importance of high-quality urban design was reinforced through the UDS, founded by the following strategic goals: (GCP, n.d.-a):

1. Promoting good urban design to make our communities more liveable and attractive with good connectivity;
2. Recognising and protecting cultural identity and sense of place; and
3. Ensuring and connection between homes, jobs, recreation and environment through mixed land uses and integrated transportation modes.

Following the Canterbury earthquake sequence, the UDS was updated in 2016, adjusting priorities and setting a programme of work to ensure the Strategy remained current and was implemented when and where it was needed most.

### 4.3.2 Our Space 2018-2048

Our Space 2018-2048 was endorsed in June 2019 as the future development strategy for Greater Christchurch. This document complements the existing UDS with its strategic planning directions strongly guided by the by the vision, goals and principles within the UDS. Our Space was also prepared in order to satisfy the requirements outlined in the National Policy Statement on Urban Development Capacity.

Although the document does not specifically reference urban design, as part of its commitments the CCC are developing programmes to support investment and housing redevelopment, with the initial focus being the central city. The Council aims to work with developers and local communities to support new development that is both commercially viable and of a quality to achieve high standards of living (GCP, 2019). This provides some context around the relationship between developers and the Council is discussed further within this research.

### 4.3.3 Central City Recovery Plan

The vison of the Christchurch Central City Recovery Plan (CCRP) is that central Christchurch will become “the thriving heart of an international city. A central city that will attract people to live, work, play, learn, stay and invest….” (CERA, p. 3). It also anticipates the central city to accommodate up to 20,000 residents. This is based on international standards for a thriving city which requires 3%

to 6% of a city's total population to live centrally (CCC, 2017). This target was set by the Crown and reinforced by Christchurch Mayor Lianne Dalziell.

The development of the CCRP was originally given to the City Council. The plan drew on a large body of work already done prior to the earthquakes (by the City Council) to revitalise the central city and included wider community consultation (the 'Share an Idea' being an example) as part of the process. The draft plan set out how the City Council would work with CERA and other central government agencies, the Regional Council, Ngai Tahu, private investors and developers, local businesses and the community.

The draft plan envisaged a thriving, cosmopolitan community in the central city (Salmon, 2015). It suggested Christchurch should become a sustainable 'city in a garden' with a distinctive modern urban identity. After further comment and consultation in August 2011, the plan was approved by the Council and presented to the Minister for approval (as required under the Earthquake Recovery Act). The Minister did not agree with some aspects of the draft plan, and in doing so, over-rid the division of responsibilities which had been agreed in March 2011, and CERA established a Central City Development Unit (CCDU), to provide clearer leadership for the rebuild of the central city.

Working with professional consultants (rather than the public), the CCDU produced a 'Blueprint', which was formally titled the Christchurch Central Recovery Plan, as shown in Figure 4.3 below.


**Figure 4.3 – Central City Recovery Plan Blueprint (CERA, 2012)**

This ‘Blueprint’ was created in 100 days and identified specific precincts within the city. ‘Anchor’ projects, which included civic buildings and public realm areas were to be delivered, predominantly by the Crown. The Blueprint also nominated a large area for 900 residential dwellings, and facilities like a stadium and a national indoor sports facility within the central city. The Minister for Canterbury Earthquake Recovery designated a number of the ‘anchor’ project sites, enabling the ability to acquire land, protect it for its intended use and expedite development under the RMA (The Property Group, 2017). The large-scale acquisition of central city land was criticised by many, however, if the ‘Blueprint’ was to be achieved, like any other major infrastructure projects in New Zealand, designation processes and the newly introduced Canterbury Earthquake Recovery Act were a logical tool for its implementation (Salmon, 2015). The CCDU built on the Council’s draft Central City Plan, setting out how ‘the vision’ which had been articulated in the submissions made during the City Council’s consultation of the community could be achieved.

The CCRP was given effect by gazette notice on 31 July 2012, and those exercising functions and powers under the RMA (including the Christchurch City Council) were not to make decisions inconsistent with the Plan. The City Council was directed to make changes to its District Plan to ensure the objectives of the recovery plan could be met, which it duly did. The CCRP became in effect a planning document for the central city separate from the District Plan. Although some of the changes that were implemented under the CCRP were unpopular with landowners and developers (The Property Group, 2017), it gave something for people to focus on, and greater certainty to the business community and people of Christchurch – a more contained, low rise city with tracts of open space, laneways and quality public realm areas.

### 4.3.4 Canterbury Regional Policy Statement

The Canterbury Regional Policy Statement (RPS) provides an overview of the resource management issues in the Canterbury Region, setting out objectives, policies and methods to achieve the integrated management of natural and physical resources (Canterbury Regional Council [CRC], 2013). These methods also include directions for provisions in district and regional plans.

The RPS is a key document in the planning framework. Prior to the earthquakes it was in the process of being updated, with appeals being heard by the Environment Court. Post-earthquake, the Government made changes to the RPS (under earthquake legislation) to provide certainty to enable local authorities and developers to make land available for residential development (Brownlee, 2011). The first amendment was revoking Proposed Change 1 to the RPS and inserting a new Chapter 12A. This chapter identified areas available for urban development amongst other matters specific to businesses, sequencing for development and integrated management.

The key change occurred in 2013, with the insertion of Chapter 6. This chapter provides a resource management framework for the recovery of Greater Christchurch, to enable and support earthquake recovery and rebuilding through to 2028, in a way that achieves the purpose of the RMA. This chapter is also consistent with the Recovery Strategy for Greater Christchurch and the CCRP, and supports both their implementation.

Policy 6.3.2, which controls the development form and urban design:

> *"Business development, residential development (including rural residential development) and the establishment of public space is to give effect to the principles of good urban design below, and those of the NZ Urban Design Protocol 2005, to the extent appropriate to the context…"*

This requires local authorities to include objectives, policies and rules (if any) in District Plans to give effect to the Policy. It also directs local authorities to: develop urban design guidelines to assist developers in addressing the matters set out in Policy 6.3.2; and consider the principles of good urban design as reflected in the NZUDP in urban design processes. The RPS also recognises urban design as a process, where ideally collaboration takes place with any non-regulatory guidelines to be developed in consultation with the development industry and professional institutes.

### 4.3.5 Christchurch District Plan

The Christchurch District Plan is a document prepared under the RMA. It manages the balance between development and use of the environment while protecting and safeguarding if for future generations. It sets a framework for land-use planning, and imposes provisions and rules to protect it, and has a very strong influence over all activities that occur in the district.

Although the Council had started its District Plan review prior to the Canterbury earthquake sequence, the Government (under special earthquake legislation) directed a new process to fast track the plan review process to enable recovery and development. The unique process used for developing the proposed Christchurch Replacement District Plan was set out in the Canterbury Earthquake (Christchurch Replacement District Plan) Order 2014 (CCC, n.d.-e). Included in the new process was a direction that an Independent Hearings Panel, rather than Council, would make decisions on the replacement plan. The Christchurch District Plan became operative on 19 December 2017 (with the exception of the coastal hazard provisions).

The District Plan continues to define the central city as being contained within Bealey, Fitzgerald, Moorhouse, Deans and Harper Avenues, and comprises a number of zones including the Central City

Residential Zone, Central City Mixed Use Zone and the Central City Business Zone. Figure 4.4 below shows the current planning map for the central city.

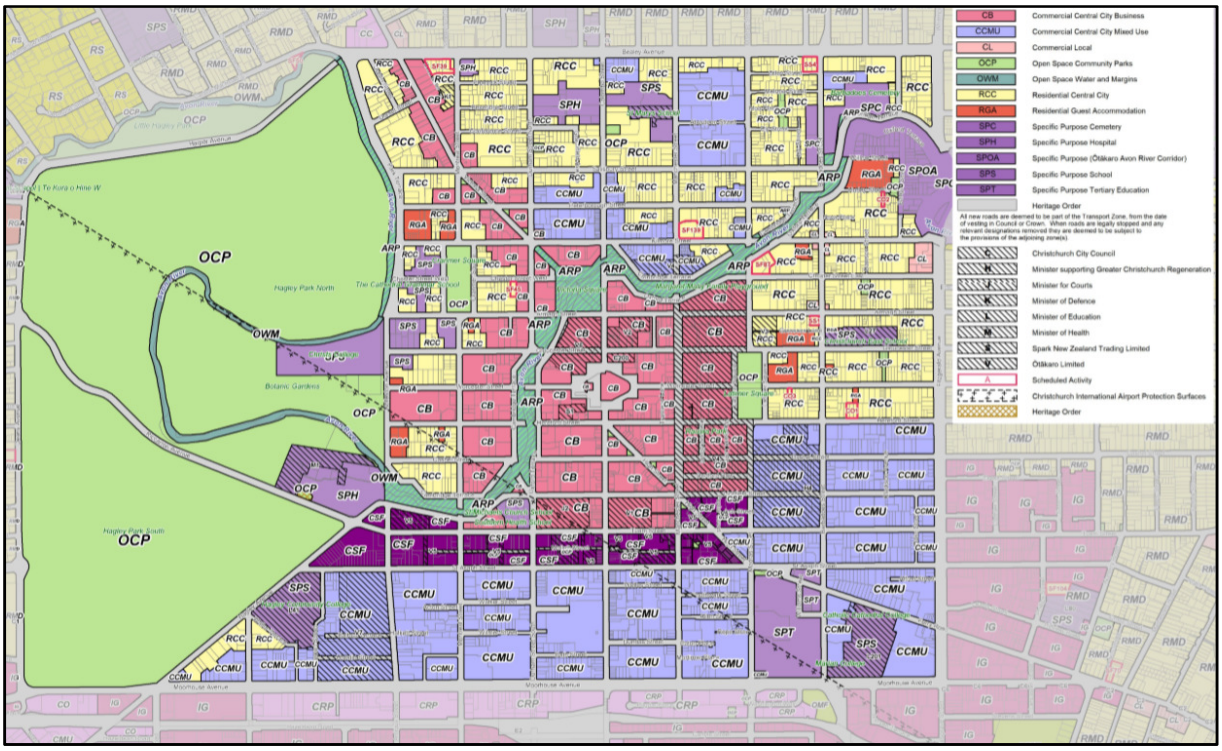


**Figure 4.4 – District Plan Map CC (CCC, n.d.-a)**

The Strategic Directions chapter provides a series of high-level objectives for the district, and leaves the articulation of activity-specific and location-specific objectives and policies to the subsequent chapters of the Plan. These objectives have primacy over the objectives and policies in the other chapters of the Plan, which must be consistent with the objectives in this Chapter. Objective 3.3.8 – *Revitalising the Central City seeks to ensure the city returns to the primary community focal point, while enhancing the amenity values, function and economic, social and cultural viability private and public sector investment, and providing a range of housing opportunities to support at least 5,000 additional households up to 2028.*

Within the Residential Chapter, Objective 14.2.4 is relevant to this research. It requires high quality residential environments be well-designed, enhance local character and reflect the Ngai Tahu heritage of Christchurch. Its supporting Policy 14.2.4.2 sets out the requirements to achieve this:

- consultative planning approaches to identifying particular areas for residential intensification and to defining high quality, *built and urban design outcomes* [emphasis added] for those areas;
- encouraging and incentivising amalgamation and redevelopment across large-scale residential intensification areas;

- *providing design guidelines to assist developers* [emphasis added] to achieve high quality, medium density development;
- *considering input from urban design experts into resource consent applications* [emphasis added];
- *promoting incorporation of low impact urban design elements* [emphasis added], energy and water efficiency, and life-stage inclusive and adaptive design; and
- *recognising that built form standards may not always support the best design and efficient use of a site for medium density development, particularly for larger sites* (emphasis added).

The key rule with regards to residential development in the central city is 14.6.1.3, which requires three or more residential units; or one or two residential units on sites less than 300m$^2$ in area to be assessed against urban design assessment matters. These matters, listed under Rule 14.15.33 include:

- engages with and contributes to adjacent streets, lanes and public open spaces;
- integrates access, parking areas and garages in a way that is safe for pedestrians and cyclists, and that does not dominate the development;
- has appropriate regard to residential amenity for occupants, neighbours and the public, in respect of outlook, privacy, and incorporation of Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design principles; and neighbourhood context, existing design styles and established landscape features on the site or adjacent sites; and
- provides for human scale and creates sufficient visual quality and interest.

These matters are very broad, and open to interpretation. They are also less onerous when compared with the design principles for multi-units outside of the central city, which more or less follow the principles of the 'seven c's' listed under the NZUDP. The District Plan has placed more emphasis on the role of urban design within the built environment, the challenge being how these provisions can be effectively managed through the design process given the growing criticism of urban design by some.

### 4.3.6 Non-regulatory documents

In addition to the urban design rules within the District Plan, the Council has produced a number of non-regulatory design guides to assist designers and developers as to appropriate outcomes. These documents are summarised below:

| Title | Summary |
|---|---|
| Large buildings in lower density zones – 1999 | A guide intended to provide designers and developers with a checklist of considerations when proposing larger than average building in a lower density living zone. |
| Creating safer communities – 2004 | This guide outlines the key principles around Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design. |
| Central city lanes plan - 2007 | A guide to reinforce the existing distinctive qualities of lanes but also develop them in ways they are unique to Christchurch. |
| Exploring new housing choices – pre-earthquake | This document looks at new housing solutions in response to the changing lifestyles and urban growth challenges of the 21st century. |
| Health promotion and sustainability by environmental design – 2010 | A tool for assessing the impact of planning policies and proposals on public health, including strategic plans, area plans and settlement plans. |
| Building multi-unit housing (in Living 3 zones) – 2014 | Intended as a reference for understanding for understanding the City Plan urban design assessment matters outlined in the previous City Plan. |
| Streets and spaces design guide – 2015 | The overarching purpose of this guide is to provide a unified comprehensive reference document for the design and delivery of public realm improvement projects in the central city. |
| Matapopore Urban Design Guide – 2015 | Developed to guide the design process of the 17 Anchor Projects identified in the CCRP. The guidelines will assist design teams on how to reflect Ngai Tahu values in contemporary designs, building in character areas and exploring new housing choices. |
| Creating new neighbourhoods – 2018 | The purpose of this design guide is to assist landowners and developers when planning and designing within the Residential New Neighbourhood Zone. |
| Character areas – 2019 | These are a series of guides to ensure appropriate development within the character area overlays specified in the District Plan. |
| Integrated planning guide – 2019 | A guide to assist in planning for healthy, resilient and sustainable communities. |

These design guidelines provide a 'process' to improve design quality and outcomes within the built environment. They could be viewed as a 'rule of thumb' to what is expected; instead clarifying what urban design should be.

### 4.3.7 Summary

The Canterbury earthquake sequence of 2010 and 2011 left large parts of the city devastated, with the central city particularly hit hard. The re-build was always going to be challenging, with pre- and post- earthquake issues being elevated into the public eye. It soon became clear that a significant and collaborative effort would be needed to reinstate the city. Although many local authorities, like Christchurch, have made good urban design outcomes a goal, implementing both statutory and non-statutory regulations since the inception of the NZUDP in 2005, the earthquake sequence prompted

a more robust framework to support the re-build and regeneration of the city. This framework, along with the current central city environment provides the context in which the UDP sits, and dictates its influence on the built environment. A thriving central city is critical to the recovery and regeneration of Christchurch.

# Chapter 5

# Results

This chapter presents the results from interviews with a number of stakeholders involved in varying components of residential development within the focus area of the central city. These include private property developers; panel members; Council planners and urban designers. The results are presented under three broad emergent themes. The first theme – 'urban design in the central city' ties together how each respondent defines urban design, and the challenges and opportunities that are presented to achieving good urban design outcomes. This is followed by an analysis of 'the role of the UDP'. This section explores how the role is perceived, and what influence, if any, the panel is having on planning processes and built form outcomes. Lastly, the theme of 'authority or advice' looks at the arguments made about whether the status of the panel should change from an advisory role to a statutory approval process. A summary is provided at the end of the chapter to provide an overall perspective on the results.

## 5.1 Defining urban design

There were a number of consistent elements that were raised amongst the interviewees. For example, both developers considered urban design as a framework around how buildings and spaces interact with each other. Planner 1 also inferred that urban design was fundamentally good planning, and its real role is "*the interface between private and public realm…. and how development can be configured to provide the most positive or the best outcome in terms of its interface with the wider public space".*

Panel member 1 discussed the importance of urban design to people and the community.

> *"The design of a city or an urban area – to make sure that it is designed for people. Not necessarily for cars or industry or for other things but fundamentally for people. Therefore, making sure streets and public spaces are designed for people to gather, for activities, and making sure the space between buildings is considered. That's it in a nutshell".*

Urban designer 1 shared a similar view, stating that urban design *"encourages good built form that encourages good community outcome".*

Both panel members extended the scope, and discussed how urban design comprises a much wider field. Panel member talked about economics:

> *"How do you make a city that is economically viable? It's all very well making it people friendly but it also needs to function. You need successful retail areas, office space that people enjoy and like to work in, and hospitality areas and living all combine to make it economically viable and people friendly. Good public transport as well – It's a huge wide field really. It touches on lots of disciplines".*

Panel member 2 expressed that *"urban design combines a number of professions to make sure the outcome is good for the community".* He referenced the varying design elements that make up urban design:

> *"It's not any one particular thing and I don't believe there is any right or wrong answer – but I think it's considering all the design elements whether it be architecture, CPTED, safety, infrastructure, planning, everything and considering all those aspects in any design whether it's a building, apartments, hotel, motel, public centre, public utility buildings to make sure they provide good design for the user and the general public.*

There was no standardised view or definition given for what urban design was, which suggests that urban design is fluid, and is largely dependent on the context in which the respondent is situated in.

## 5.2 Opportunities for good urban design in the central city

There was a consistent theme amongst the respondents when it came to identifying the opportunities for good urban design within the central city. Planner 1 highlighted the importance of larger land parcels:

> *"Bigger sites make it easier – when you have a lot of street frontage and you're not cramped up on where you put your access point and you're not limited by the requirements to provide a driveway that then squeezes the rest of the site. If you have a lot of frontage you can put one access point in and arrange internally much better".*

This was reinforced by both developers who considered that having multiple large land parcels in a single ownership structure provided the ability to master plan and a achieve a more cohesive design and positive urban design outcome. In contrast, although Urban designer 1 believed lot size was important, it was not critical, and that small is better. He considered that there was:

> *"a missed opportunity in the Blueprint where they created these large development blocks that in theory were good but basically took out the little guys. The City is made up of lots of little players and that's good from a design point of view. You get that smaller*

*development. There are a lot of big holes in the City that are waiting for development that tends to end up in car parking. Small is better".*

Panel member 1 had a contradicting view on the 'Blueprint', but agreed that smaller developments add interest to a city:

*"After the earthquake we have seen a lot of variety in commercial and inner-city development where the likes of Philip Carter, Anthony Gough and Tim Glasson bought up large city blocks. This was partly forced on them by the Blueprint plan where they had to do comprehensive development like the laneways and courtyard networks which have been good from an urban design perspective. We are beyond that phase now and it is more about that infill and smaller investment which I think we need. This smaller grain, finer grain infill makes a city more interesting".*

A second theme to emerge was the context in which development was happening within, for example exemplar projects and investment within the central city. Panel member 1 considered the following:

*"Exemplar projects really help. That's where the government and the Council in particular need to step up – and I'm not saying they haven't – they have done some good stuff like the Avon River precinct, what they are starting to do on Manchester Street with the paving and the landscaping. Margaret Mahy playground and Victoria Square are other examples. If you set the scene with good design, I would hope you encourage good development around these. It would be embarrassing to do something crappy next to such a beautiful open area".*

Urban designer 1 had a similar view – *"Investment from government like the anchor projects and money put into public and open spaces. Developers or investors who are wanting to invest in the City. There are some out there that want good development".*

The importance of having a good designer was the last common theme amongst the respondents. Planner 1 started by saying that:

*"Having designers and architects that are more prepared to engage with the UDP and the District Plan provisions and are maybe a bit stronger in terms of their interaction with their own clients because going to the UDP or getting a resource consent are not necessary bad things – they are not things that mean that you can't do the development".*

Planner 1 believed good designers who breached District Plan rules were confident in justifying why they were achieving a better design outcome, and even suggested that this should happen on a more regular basis:

> *"You might need to break some rules and need a designer to say let's do X and Y instead, go through a process, go to the UDP and get them to support it to get a better outcome. We can build something better and they will be more saleable and worth more. Just complying with the rules gives you a bargain basement product – the rules just get you over the line. There's nothing that gives you a good outcome – just an adequate outcome by following the rules".*

Panel member 1 enjoyed panel meetings more where there were good designers who were willing to engage:

> *"The panels I don't enjoy are with poor designs driven solely by the developer who wants to make as much money as they can and doesn't care about quality. At times they don't bother to turn up. But good designers allow a good conversation and discussion – they're open, were open. It's a design session that we both get something out of it. That's the way it should work".*

Panel member 2 also expressed how valuable a good designer is, including the importance of developers having adequate funding available for this:

> *"It's also developers having budgets to put money into good design upfront… Good designers come from good budgets / funding and is open to what the designers come up with. I think a lot of times that doesn't exist – no fault of anyone other than its the reality of it – people want to do a development, they have an idea in their mind, they only have a certain budget because there is only a certain amount of sales and a set amount of income coming in and they have to make sure there risk is covered and really the one cost that can be controlled is the design costs at the beginning".*

Developer 2's response to having a good designer was *"…for sure. It has too. Urban design has to be part of your design from the outset. Each has their own view and that's what makes each development slightly different while still achieving good outcomes".*

The importance of having a good designer is an interesting theme to emerge from the interviews. The results clearly indicate that their role is twofold; firstly, ensuring a good design outcome; and secondly acting as a facilitator between the UDP and developer – a tension that is further highlighted within this research.

## 5.3 Urban design challenges in the central city

Like the opportunities presented above, the challenges identified were also consistent between the respondents. Planner 1 spoke about site size and dimensions, believing that a number of properties "*don't really lend themselves to good outcomes".* He continued by saying:

> *"… just the size and dimensions of them, the frontage width, the street edge width or if they are long narrow sites they are just not that easy to get good outcomes or to put buildings on them that relate well to the street while trying to include access and service spaces and orientate everything else…."*

Panel member 1 considered that *"If you look at the standard dimensions of sections, they have short street frontages, but are really quite deep. It's that historic subdivision pattern".* This geometric lay-out was typical of the standard 'rectangular grid' or colonial settlement. Panel member 1 then discussed the implications of developing these sites:

> *"… it tends to mean you get the sausage flat type approach which are quite nasty where you have a driveway down the side and you have to drive into your garage. You end up with the ground floor dominated by garages and cars with your living upstairs. There is limited or no ground level activation".*

Both developers have been involved with development where multiple parcels were amalgamated, and being the sole developer, they had more of an opportunity to master plan which made things easier. However, the barriers they face mainly centre around cost, population and the market. Developer 1 stated that:

> *"From a development perspective you are always wanting to deliver something that provides the best urban design outcome. But I guess the financial of these things sometimes just dictate that you can't have that. What we are seeing as well using Christchurch as my point of reference, we don't have the population to deliver some of the urban design ideals that we should have in the central city. Costs are pretty exorbitant as well. We are in a location where you are dealing with a lot of issues on the ground coming off the back of the earthquakes. There is no pent-up demand for that inner city living – It wasn't here pre-quake and it's still not here post-quake".*

Developer 2 adds to this argument, stating that:

> *"I think that population piece is a massive one. We don't have a massive amount of employment in the central city which is not driving people to live here. We are still*

*missing some key amenity features – the stadium, convention centre which all adds to the enjoyment of living there…. They don't kill good urban design but they don't help it".*

Urban designer 1 supports the above thinking from the developers, and considers there to be *"no value in the land to get the development off the ground. People can use their sites for car parking and generate an income out of it. Build costs are high and the potential rental market isn't there. There is a lot of risk. The amenity in the central city isn't here yet so there is no critical mass to attract people".*

Another theme that was common between two of the interviewees was the attitude towards urban design. Panel member 1 found there was a *"general lack of understanding from some people in positions of influence as to the importance of good urban design. It tends to not be high on the priority list…. So, I think one of the biggest barriers within the central city is getting people to appreciate the importance of good design".* Planner 1 considered the *"willingness of developers or development companies to take advice where it results in changes to their model or stock design"* as a real issue. He continued by saying *"I think that is really hard for them as they operate on a knife edge where everything is worked out to a fairly fine degree…".*

The results demonstrate the perennial barriers to the delivery of better urban design outcomes, in particular the financial implications, thus elevating tensions between urban design and the development community.

## 5.4 The role of the UDP

The role of the UDP is defined as being "a group of leading built-environment professionals who provide free, independent design review for both the private and public sectors, to support the quality rebuild of Christchurch" (CCC, n.d.-b). Although there was general agreement with this, each respondent perceived the role in their own way. Planner 1 viewed the role of the panel as being two-pronged:

> *"It's essentially a pre-advice service. They provide advice and feedback to the developer about good design in relation to the District Plan, and good design generally in relation to the site and context. They also provide a useful commentary and advice to the Council's own urban designers and planners in terms of dealing with the resource consent process".*

Panel member 1 sees the role of the UDP as *"something not to be worried about"*, and a friendly positive experience. He continues by saying:

> *"In an ideal world I would hope that people see it has a chance to have some independent peer review of a design and a chance to get free design ideas – things they may not have thought about and a chance to get outside of their own little bubble… People don't have to pay so it doesn't feel like it's being forced on you. Its pre-design advice".*

Developer 1 talked about the independent and unbiased opinions the panel take on development proposals:

> *"You are utilising the skills of people who are experienced and well-respected to give you another oversight of what you are doing… I think they tend to have a reasonably pragmatic take on life – they are people who have worked in the private vs public sector. On the whole they are there as a third party to review and assess and provide their professional expertise".*

Panel member 2 views the panel as not quite a peer review, but more of a *"discussion about design and the good and bad points"*. He finished by saying:

> *"I think having a variety of professions is quite good… This has the ability to have a few different people that are not being paid by the client and a little but unbiased or as unbiased as can be so it is an independent review. Being independent they are not constrained by what they know of the site or the developer".*

Asked whether the role has changed post-earthquake, Panel member 1 believed that it *"probably has some more importance. The role in terms of what we do hasn't really changed from its day to day application. Post-quake we are doing schemes that are far more important to the future of our city. More weight of responsibility on what we do".* Panel member 2 shared a similar viewpoint:

> *"I know from talking with the others that when the panel started in 2008 to post earthquake it's changed quite a bit just through the volume of work that has been presented. Previously there may have been one or two buildings a year to now being multiple building and development on a more frequent occasion. It is still providing independent advice".*

Planner 1 didn't believe the role of the panel had changed, but more so the requirements under the District Plan, which requires more urban design assessment within the central city - *"The District Plan is more urban design focused post-earthquake. The role is still the same. I have been to the panel a lot more since the earthquakes generally because there was a lot more building going on, and central city building that wasn't happening before the earthquakes".*

Developer 2 shared a very different opinion on the role of the UDP. He understood the UDP was promoted as being *"an independent panel to help developers and provide guidance and input from their expertise."* However, he believed that developers do not use the panel for help, and that most developers *"depending on the scale of the project, get pressured to attend the UDP through the resource consent process. They see it as a challenge to their design rather than an aid."* He continued to explain his view on the UDP from a development perspective:

> *"… I engage a number of consultants, that in my view will design the project to meet my specific requirements in the best way possible. Do I then need additional people outside of who I have engaged to add more comment? I don't think so. Is it a tick box – yes. Council get comfort from their own staff having the panel review and advise in shaping their resource consent decision, even though their comments hold no weight".*

This reflects similar comments shared by other developers who have been vocal in publicly criticising the role of the UDP. For example, Anthony Gough, a prominent property investor has criticised the role of the panel. While redeveloping The Terrace project, the panel wanted *"architecture worthy of a suburban shopping mall"*. Gough (as cited in Harvie, 2013) continues by saying:

> *"When I went to the urban design panel, they said ... there's no uniformity. It's all different. You've got to have ... Westfield (mall). You know, bland, creamy, homogenous… Stuff the urban design panel and their monolithic [walls]…… They've got no teeth. I turned up, did my day there and that's fine. Tick the box and move on".*

Panel member 1, who is a long serving member of the panel, expressed his thoughts on developers and how they view the role of the panel:

> *"Certain developers are very much dis-interested in urban design and are more about making money and jamming things in as cheaply as possible, getting their money out and moving onto the next project. They are not considering the legacy they are leaving behind for the next 50 years in the city."*

Panel member 2 was also of the opinion that *"some developments won't get put in front of the panel because Council's urban designers don't feel that there will be any changes made. This is mainly due to who the developer is and their history or where the project is in its design cycle".*

However, following on from the above, Panel member 2 raised an interesting point that could further explain the negative sentiment around the role of the panel:

> *"I think there can be a tendency for the UDP to get too involved with a design and look at it as to how they would like to see it, rather than what the objectives of the client are. Wanting to bring more into design than what is sometimes required under the District Plan to try and make it extra special. Not every development needs to be extra special – developments will have good points and bad points. You can't always have a Rolls Royce design. You need a mixture of both. There's always the underlying risk that although the UDP is non-biased, if they see a developer doing the same thing over and over again, there is always some bias toward this – it's just human nature".*

The results suggest that the Panel is there to support both the Council and the development community in achieving good outcomes. One of the founding and current members of the UDP, Jasper van der Lingen (as cited in Greenhill, Dally and Harvie, 2013) has previously stated that the "panel's design advice was not based simply on the building's proposed, but how it fits within the urban environment." He considers that the quality of the proposals being presented to the panel were "generally good", with a number of designs needing to be given a chance after they were built rather than being judged solely on an artist's impression. He states that "no city in the world could boast every building as a masterpiece. We're just trying our best to improve the worst and commend the best", and as Panel member 1 best describes, *"It's not just a step to beat developers with".* However, what is becoming evident is the significant disconnect between the developer and the Council's UDP process, which in turn impacts on the identified challenges and/or motivations in delivering residential development and other key projects within the central city.

## 5.5 Influence on the planning process

On balance, all participants believed that the UDP was making a difference to the planning process, albeit with differing degrees of support. For example, Planner 1 stated:

> *"From my perspective its really valuable…Particularly where there are elements that are contentious, or maybe difficult to get through a consent process. I value the input of the panel. There commentary is from a pure best practice design perspective about whether things are good outcomes or not. Almost independent of what the District Plan says.*

Both Developers agreed that the Council planners and urban designers *"took on board the panels comments and/or recommendations",* using these to add weight, justify their own opinions or simply to make a decision. Urban designer 1 shared a similar opinion, stating that:

> *"I think it definitely helps the Council planners if there is a proposal that's not what's anticipated in the zone or it breaches something. I think they are much more open to allowing the design if supported by the panel".*

Panel member 1 hoped the panel had made *"some difference to the planning process"*. He continued by saying:

> *"The thing with the panel is that we often see the application and meet for a couple of hours and don't have any more interaction after that. Then the Council and Council urban designers take over".*

Planner 1 concluded by saying:

> "*complying with the plan doesn't mean it's any good – they sometimes support things that you may not have thought they would. I think it's good for the planner to have more interaction with the design side. It increases your awareness of some of the issues that go with it. Remember the panel are all practicing professionals".*

The results suggest that the UDP can fill a role where the planning framework may be too prescriptive, or deficient in achieving appropriate outcomes. The UDP has the ability to act as an intermediary between planning frameworks and stakeholders in terms of improving design outcomes.

## 5.6 Enhancing the built form

Some of the participants acknowledged the positive influence the panel was having on built outcomes in the central city, albeit incremental. Their views were similar, with a common understanding that there had been a shift in awareness. Planner 1 had the following to say on multiple attendees to the panel:

> *"… they start to get a feel for what the panel is talking about. I think that has lifted particularly with a few developers who have done a lot in the central city recently – they have lifted their game a little bit and are starting to address matters their earlier proposals didn't feature. Now they are starting to think… So, I think it is lifting quality".*

Panel member 2 also expressed the same view that:

> *"Some developers … have attended a number of panels, ignored a few but have made slight little changes as they move forward – bigger windows along a more prominent façade, change in orientation there, changes in landscaping. They are taking stuff on board and slowly introducing these changes – probably not to the extent that everyone wants but it is coming in".*

Although these small changes may be discernible when viewed now, Panel member 2 finished by saying that *"they will they make a difference – five, ten or even fifteen years from now in terms of aesthetics and ease of living".*

One of the common themes that has been raised a number of times through the interviews is the link between good urban design outcomes and the commercial reality. Again, both developers agree that urban design has enhanced the built form, but not the panel itself. Developer 1 explains:

> *"It's a really tough balancing act. I think good urban design adds value to a degree, but we are ultimately driven by dollars and cents… Good urban design does not necessarily gel with good development feasibility…"*

Developer 2 continued by saying:

> *"I think urban design has, not so much from the panel… How many times do we take comments on board from the UDP – not very often… Ultimately most designs have been put together by a professional group of designers – so then it is just a critique of another designer's work".*

Panel member 1 had the following to say on the influence of the UDP on the final built outcome:

> *"We have asked for feedback on whether our recommendations are being implemented. They* [The Council] *appreciate this and are attempting to make a feedback loop for us. In most instances we don't really know how much developers listen to us".*

A key challenge, however lies in the fact that few interventions are subjected to analysis that compares outcomes with process of delivery. As suggested by Panel member 1, urban design proposals are rarely subjected to post-occupancy review in the way that buildings are. Furthermore, the literature does not focus too much on the urban design process and its relationship to the final design outcome. This will be the true measure of the influence of the UDP on the built environment.

## 5.7 Authority or advice?

The status of the panel is advisory to the Council, with no decision-making powers. However, through the course of the interviews, the possibility of the Panel adopting a statutory role was raised. Often, there was strong resentment against this, with agreement amongst the participants that an advisory approach remain in place. Panel member 2 said it would be wrong having a few people sign off design – "*there needs to be room to have things different and for the market to dictate a little bit. It would be wrong to progress into a statutory role".*

Panel member 1 believed that if the panel had more power, it would change the tone of the conversations between the panel and applicants. He would still like it to be a discussion between designers, talking about what they have done and ways we can improve. He continued by saying:

> *"If it became a case of us saying yes or no to a scheme it would not be that friendly… I think its best the way it is now as an advisory role. At the end of the day the people who make the final decision is the Council and if the developer wants to challenge that they can do through the RMA".*

Developer 2 considers urban design is too subjective, and what is needed is certainty of an outcome. He provided the following example to put his thoughts into context:

> *"A developer should be able to understand the statutory requirements for what they need to do for their developments. When it comes to urban design, it's the one piece that makes things murky. It's not clear what good urban design looks like. Especially when you put what good urban design looks like in the context of a challenging economic market. It's really good having a vision of what the city shape should be looking like in the future, but unfortunately that's not what we are building too as the current market cannot sustain this. If you add another level or hurdle, like a formal approval process, I don't think that's the right response".*

It is clear from the interviews that an advisory model of design review is preferred over a more statutory approval process. Furthermore, any legislative changes to the status of urban design panels would be challenging in the current climate, mainly due to the subjective nature of the field.

## 5.8 Summary

Ultimately, the perceived role of the UDP is understood, and there is agreement that urban design is having a positive influence on the built environment. The results have reinforced the idea that good urban design is viewed differently amongst the varying groups involved, and how they in turn influence the final design. Good urban design outcomes are not just about aesthetics – they involve more complex processes, including a collaborative approach in order to shape our changing environment. What has become clear throughout this research is that the perceived tension between the development community and urban design well and truly exists, with the UDP contributing towards this. This tension is exacerbated further through the cost of urban design to developers, and the drive for financial return from their investments.

# Chapter 6

# Discussion

The purpose of this research is to develop more of an understanding on the role of the Christchurch UDP post-earthquake in the central city; its direct and indirect influence on the built environment; and the deficiencies in the broader planning framework and institutional settings that it might be addressing. This chapter provides an informed discussion addressing the following research questions:

1. What are the key challenges and opportunities to good urban design in the central city?
2. Is the role of the UDP understood by the various users?
3. Is urban design review influencing these users?
4. Should the UDP retain its advisory status or is there pressure to change to a more formal process?

The findings highlight the tension between the development community and urban design. This chapter will argue that the UDP and cost of good urban design is a contributing factor to this tension.

## 6.1 Defining urban design

The literature identified that given its multi-dimensional nature, urban design is still open to interpretation, suggesting that how someone defines urban design will ultimately depend on what they are trying to do or achieve.

Based on my findings, it is clear that there was no standardised view or definition given for what urban design is or was. This demonstrates that urban design is fluid, and is largely dependent on the context in which the respondent is situated in. The definitions used within this research, both in the literature review and the interviews, could be best described as a product of post-modern thinking on what outcomes we expect for our towns and cities. They also serve to increase our understanding of the nature and role of urban design, and suggest that there is no 'one best way', rather, ideal form is context dependent.

## 6.2 The value of good urban design

When asked does urban design add value, many advocates will still say that it does. The participants interviewed in this research collectively agreed that urban design adds value in some sense, with their views aligning with the likes of Carmona (2013) and Moore at el (2015), who considered that

good design manifests in a variety of ways for different stakeholders and improves outcomes across a range of parameters. Although there is agreement within the wider literature on value outcomes from urban design, the challenge itself is with 'value'. Within the context of the built environment, value has typically been viewed of in terms of capital returns and costs, property values or other formal economic measures across a limited range of tangible considerations; location, quality, function, aesthetics and return on investment (Abdul-Samad and Macmillan, 2004, as cited in Moore et al, 2015). However, as Moore et al (2015) suggests, understanding the value of wider elements, such as quality of life, liveability, and sense of place are just as important.

The results have highlighted that the design quality of buildings and wider urban environments has not always been a priority issue for some stakeholders, with some suggesting that developers in particular are still primarily concerned about their own requirements. They have little consideration to good design outcomes and how these impact on the wider urban environment, and therefore don't meet the needs of the whole community. This view aligns with Moore et al (2015), who considered that the "the existence of such market failures is a critical factor in current problems in delivering good urban design and improving value outcomes for society" (para. 5). Unless market-led development shares the same or similar goals as the Council, the resultant urban fabric is unlikely to deliver the goals anticipated. The research indicates that the market is dictating what should be built, and as Developer 1 suggests,"*… urban design tends to go the wayside a little bit… you have a vision that is amazing but when you start looking at the nuts and bolts it's the first thing that goes… good urban design does not necessarily gel with good development feasibility".*

Therefore, establishing good urban design is more a matter of making sure that any adjustments made are done in a way that supports the overall liveability of a space, while balancing the economic, environmental, cultural and social values that define it. As the NZUDP states, "Quality urban design is important for everyone, simply because we are all connected in some way or another through the common built environment" (MfE, 2005, p. 7).

## 6.3 The property developer

The research and literature highlight that attitudes of developers can vary considerably, and as Lang (2017) suggests, some are vitally interested in the common good; others are not. Panel member 1, who is a prominent member of the panel believed that there were certain developers in the city who had no time and/or were very much *"dis-interested in urban design… getting their money out and moving onto the next project".*

However, the earthquake sequence introduced and reignited issues within the central city. There was a degree of uncertainty post-earthquake around the safety of building within the central city. The

earthquakes had exposed a lack of information, or at least a lack of recognition in the city's plans, about the security of the ground foundation for building on some sites, which took time to resolve. There was also significant commercial risk and declining developer confidence about investing in residential development in the city. As Developer 1 pointed out, *"we are in a location where you are dealing with a lot of issues on the ground coming off the back of the earthquakes. There is no pent-up demand for that inner city living – It wasn't here pre-quake and it's still not here post-quake".* Developer 2 extended this to the market:

> *"… we need to achieve certain returns and to do that we need to listen to what the market wants – we take a customer centric approach and deliver what our customer wants that align with our commercial requirements. Unfortunately, this does not necessarily align with what people perceive as good urban design".*

Developers are generally under financial pressure from the outset, not only to get development out of the ground, but to make a return on their investment. The development cycle needs to be fast to avoid paying higher interest to banks, creating more emphasis on investment return rather than long term quality of the built environment. This was supported by Developer 2, who said *"I guess the financial of these things sometimes just dictate that you can't have that [urban design]";* while Developer 1 suggested "*You have a vision that is amazing but when you start looking at the nuts and bolts it's [urban design] is the first thing that goes".* This is where developers have to decide what's more important, which inevitably involves value judgement trade-offs amongst different and competing elements, with the aim in achieving an optimum outcome with overall benefits. The research suggests that normative aspirations are difficult to deliver without a focus on other key objectives – such as creating economic value. However, is there a direct link between better quality urban design and higher economic value? I believe that demonstrating an economic dividend still remains a major challenge for urban design.

Most developers in this environment have an agenda – they want to do things their own way, the way they know how, and at the end of the day, make a profit on their investments. This aligns with both Boyko et al (2005) and Lang (2017), who both considered that different groups or professionals apply urban design on their own terms, and are developing their own knowledge base on this subjective field. The research supports this theory.

## 6.4 The role of the urban design panel

The Christchurch City Council established the UDP as part of its commitment to the UDS. It was informal in the sense that the panel was not part of any statutory process of regulation or approval, with the intent of being advisory only. It is clear that the Council hoped that this design review

process would raise the expectations of design and help improve the quality across the city. Yet, its immediate function was to provide advice, or as Carmona (2018) suggests, a formative critique to assist in improving individual proposals. As Developer 1 put its; *"you are utilising the skills of people who are experienced and well-respected to give you an oversight of what you are doing".* Further to this, the panel can offer expert views on complex design issues and draw attention to bigger picture issues. The key feature of design review is that the advice is independent, and bespoke from experts unconnected with the proposal being considered. There are measures in place to ensure that this independence is upheld.

The Council has a series of triggers that identify what proposals would benefit from design review, however, cannot oblige developers to submit their proposals for review, nor can the panel require the Council planner to take their advice on board. Based on the integrated model of evaluating design quality as stated by Carmona et al (2010), decision making forms part of the wider planning process, and although the Council can seek advice from the UDP, they are still ultimately responsible for weighing up and balancing advice received on other factors before determining an appropriate outcome. However, as Carmona (2018) suggested, the danger with this approach is that design could become a spectator, and not considered at all. This can work for smaller projects where urban design may not be viewed as a critical issue, but for larger more complex proposals, it would take a planner who was extremely confident in their own ability to not take on board expert design advice. The findings of this research highlight that the Council planners, more often than not, use the design review advice to support or add further weight to their own decisions, and as Planner 1 stated, *"From my perspective it's really valuable…. Particularly stuff I get has elements that are contentious, or maybe difficult to get through a consent process so I value the input of the panel elements".*

The interviews suggest that from a regulatory perspective, the panel is having a positive influencing on development:

> *"…it may be that often they are quite small changes and not that noticeable until you look in some detail at it. There is a lifting of awareness. If people have come to the panel on a few occasions with designs for different sites they start to get a feel for what the panel is talking about. I think that has lifted particularly with a few developers who have done a lot in the central city recently – they have lifted their game a little bit and starting to address matters their earlier resource consent application didn't mention. Now they are starting to think about it and address it. So, I think it is lifting quality".*

Panel Member 2 also raised the fact that having the UDP shows the city that the council is interested in good design – *"the fact that they employ experts to come on and give advice it does show the outcome is important and not just left to the market…. I think it's a positive that is overlooked, not so*

*much about design and outcome but the public perception that the Council has a UDP and is doing what it can to influence design so that it turns out good is good for the general population".*

However, despite the findings showing that the perceived role of the UDP is understood – being an independent advisory peer review system, and a positive influence from a regulatory perspective, there is still a feeling amongst the development community that the panel and Council urban design staff take an excessively negative and critical approach to proposals. But why is this? The developers interviewed generally expressed an understanding of urban design, its value and the role of the panel; but where the 'rubber meets the road'; the process seems easily derailed by the cost of development, and again attitude.

Let's step into the shoes of a developer for a second. Costs and budgets are extremely tight, right down to the style of the bath tap. The UDP reviews your proposal and suggests and/or recommends changes to the aesthetics of buildings; a larger living or bedroom window or more articulation in a roof line. While these changes seem minor, and not too drastic, it's the wider implications that can be costly. A larger window could mean changes to the structural framing of the building, or a change in roofline means the bearing capacity of the foundation methodology needs to be changed to accommodate additional load or cladding. This is where costs can get out of hand; budgets change and timeframes are pushed out. This was reinforced through both developers who said that cost was the main driver behind design, and the *"financial of these things sometimes just dictate that you can't have that [urban design]".*

This research shows that the Christchurch UDP is operating within its practical limitations as an advisory process. Although the interviews highlighted the varying opinions on the role and influence of the UDP, this is largely dependent on what context each group sits within the development cycle. Like any process, it's not going to work all the time, and in some cases, developers will be annoyed that it hasn't helped their project, or slowed it down and introduced more problems. But that's like all processes – you will never please everyone. I think it simply comes down to communication and/or collaboration, ensuring that; aspirations are fully understood; proposals do not become hijacked by narrow interests; and all legitimate inputs are taken on board.

## 6.5 Empowering the role of the designer

An interesting theme raised through the interviews, and warrants further discussion was the importance of having a good designer. According to Lang (2017), good designers can have a significant influence on developers, convincing them of the added value in good urban design. The findings in this research support this theory, with the majority of the participants discussing the importance of having a good designer, not only for the vision and final built outcome, but more

importantly their willingness to engage with the panel. This is an important point in the context of this research when discussing attitudes towards the UDP, and is explored later within this chapter.

Panel member 2 strongly believed that *"good designers allow a good conversation and discussion… with both parties getting something out of it"*. Planner 1 supported this further by stating that *"having designers and architects that are more prepared to engage with the UDP and the District Plan provisions and are maybe a bit stronger in terms of their interaction with their own clients"*. I agree with both the literature and the participants around the importance of a good designer.

However, there are challenges with having a good designer. Lang (2017) discussed that designers seldom consciously consider more than a limited set of the potential functions that the built environment can serve in their designs given they are influenced by budget. Panel member 2 shared similar thoughts to Lang (2017), stating that *"they [developers] have an idea in their mind, they only have a certain budget because there is only a certain amount of sales and a set amount of income coming in and they have to make sure there risk is covered and really the one cost that can be controlled is the design costs at the beginning"*. Does Panel member 2 suggest that good design comes from good budgets? This would be an area that the research could be expanded to.

No matter how you define what a 'good designer' is, the onus is always on the developer to make decisions, not only on design that may or may not result in a return on investment, but whether they want to, or have to engage with the panel on their development proposals. As mentioned by some of the participants, there are certain developers out there that just won't engage with the UDP full stop.

This research has demonstrated to a degree that the designer can play a crucial role in acting as a 'mediator' between the panel and the developer. However, it's still to be seen whether the role of the designer has been, or can be extended to change the perceived negative attitude that has been expressed towards the panel, and if this would change how the panel influences development.

## 6.6 Does design review address deficiencies in the local planning system?

Christchurch's rebuild and regeneration following the Canterbury earthquake sequence has been a contentious issue. Chapter 4 outlined the urban design 'blueprint' for the rebuild of central city, with a combination of statutory and non-statutory documents used to complement the wider planning and policy framework. Yet lack of clarity around roles, grouped with limited national guidance and the disjuncture the RMA is perceived to have created is making it difficult for the Council to implement good urban design measures in order to achieve the identified objectives and goals effectively. As Nicholson (2014) states, regulation is required to avoid the adverse effects of poorly designed developments on the urban environment and on urban communities. The challenge is how to balance regulation against the rights of landowners to use and develop their land. Urban design

regulations that prevent land from being used reasonably and economically do not benefit cities or the urban environment.

Although central city regulation locked down land use, it fails in the sense that there is limited flexibility to change use, and that circumstances and attitudes evolve. This begs the question – is our planning framework too prescriptive for the desired outcomes trying to be achieved? Without a doubt the central city has seen bold and innovative designs rise from the rubble, however, in many cases, the status quo and pre-earthquake residential design still prevails.

The new Christchurch District Plan was considered to be enabling of regeneration, essentially removing barriers for redevelopment. This was reinforced through the statutory requirement for the District Plan to 'not be inconsistent with' the CCRP. However, some developers still considered that the rule framework was still overly prescriptive and added too much cost to make developments viable. Higher level policy documents such as the RPS required denser forms of urban residential development within the central city; however, this did not translate into local market experience or developer confidence about investing in this type of development. Both developers interviewed shared similar views, confirming that cost, population and a fluctuating market were the key challenges – "*They don't kill good urban design but they don't help it".* Further to this, Developer 2 was critical of this urban design 'blueprint' – "*When it comes to urban design, it's the one piece that makes things murky. It's not clear what good urban design looks like… It's really good having a vision of what the city shape should be looking like in the future, but unfortunately that's not what we are building too as the current market cannot sustain this".*

Are the above examples situations of where the planning framework is creating unnecessary frustration amongst the development community with overly prescriptive regulation? Or could it be that *"there is a general lack of understanding from some people in positions of influence as to the importance of good urban design. It tends to not be high on the priority list…".*

Development controls are generally not written in such a way that demands a performance outcome. Does this suggest that District Plan rules are too arbitrary? Or do they run the risk of poor building outcomes where development is driven by rule conformance, rather than as a result of achieving quality outcomes driven by performance criteria. There's an appreciation, desire and need to provide certainty for landowners and developers, recognising the fact that planners clearly prefer defined prescriptive rules to give certainty. Regulatory processes can impose unnecessary constraints that can give some stakeholders the perception to play it safe. What we need is less prescriptive controls that encourage good development and the UDP fills a gap in this framework. It can censor constraints and provide further support and/or justify why the proposal meets the desired outcome while giving the Council justification through the resource consent process.

Given the direction of the CCRP and the emphasis on good urban design outcomes, should design review become mandatory for all projects within the central city? Perhaps Christchurch needs to take the opportunity to borrow some experience from successful panels overseas to further add value to the UDP process. It's not about adding cost or bureaucracy to the development process as some opponents suggest, rather strengthening the process and framework that already exists, continuing to raise the bar in a competitive market where perception of amenity in the built environment attracts dollars.

Finally, the UDP reviews and evaluates urban design proposals and projects against the District Plan, which gains regulatory power under the RMA. This research has demonstrated that design review panels cannot work in isolation from District Plans and the overarching principles of the RMA. This leads me to the following question – Are District Plans conducive to demanding good urban design outcomes? At the end of the day, proposals must be considered under the statutory provisions of the RMA, and they of course have to take into account matters other than urban design. In practice the positive and beneficial value of proposals sometimes lose out to perceived adverse effects.

## 6.7 An independent voice or a peripheral one?

The literature review in Chapter 2 outlines the two models of design review; regulatory and advisory. Panels in New Zealand have been used as an advisory role, and as Wood (2014) states, provides early and constructive advice to developers, advice to Council planners, and more importantly "champion" good design for the community. Carmona (2018) considers that advisory design review processes are used more a "formative critique as opposed to a summative evaluation" (p. 2).

In discussing whether the participants saw any benefit from the panel shifting to a regulatory function, it was uniformly agreed that the 'status quo' remained – being and independent and advisory peer review process. The research suggested that there was already a tendency for the panel to get too involved with a design, trying to bring more into the design than what was sometimes required. As an advisory role, it is important that the panel steers away from being prescriptive around design outcomes. The task of finding appropriate design solutions remains squarely with the developer and their design team. No matter what model of design review a city adopts, people will always have a differing opinion on what constitutes a good design outcome and there will always be some form of bias – it's simply "human nature". However, Panel member 1 posed the following question - *"the other side is that people say what is the point of the UDP if it cannot make decisions"?*.

Carmona's (2018) regulatory model of a binding recommendation or consent itself would be more effective in influencing design outcomes, putting urban design at the forefront of the planning

process. It would also further enhance the CCC's commitment, as a foundation signatory of the NZUDP to making Christchurch *"more successful through quality urban design"* (CCC, n.d.-b).

However, the risk is whether there is sufficient knowledge and skill to address matters outside of the 'urban design bubble', and make significant decisions; decisions that could be viewed as contradicting the core principles of the RMA - the sustainable management of our environment, and managing adverse environmental effects that activities and development impose, now and in the future. Maybe we need to remove some layers and simply look at introducing more specific design guidelines and qualitative assessment (with some flexibility built in to accommodate change and new innovation) as opposed to the current prescriptive rule frameworks. This is where the role of the UDP could be strengthened with the approval process becoming more advisory and collaborative rather than adversarial.

Any legislative changes to the status of urban design panels would be challenging, simply based on the subjective nature of the field and the variety of issues spread across territorial authorities – land size, population, the skill set of staff, district plans and fundamental resource management issues that challenge each local authority. Imposing a 'one size fits all' process that addresses this variety simply does not work in practice. Design review should be left to local authorities to determine, based on local politics of the development process and the sheer power of the market. The challenge, as Punter (2007) suggests, is incorporating the review process into a planning system, with the key issue being where to start and with what level of intervention.

## 6.8 Summary

Despite the many attempts to introduce 'warm' policy statements and/or mechanisms to achieve good urban design, there is still no statutory position for urban design in the planning framework (only design criteria in the district plan and some policy direction in higher level planning documents). Urban design is still viewed as a luxury (nice to have if budgets allow); and remains entirely discretionary and subjective. At the outset of this research I asked myself if the UDP played more of a role, or had more influence on 'anchor projects', or projects of significance where there was a distinct correlation between the public and private realms. Would they influence stock standard residential development where costs and margins were tight?

I consider that what both developers are saying reaffirms that in its current state, urban design is dictated by the market, and not so much by the panel, and therefore the commitment to urban design and quality sits with the developer in the first instance. In this context, urban design is very limited and as made obvious through the interviews, constrained by a number of viability issues. The UDP was set up to avoid bad design, but given its lack of authority and rigor, some developers

seemingly have the power to choose not to engage and continue with stock standard design, or design that they perceive as providing a good outcome. This leads me to believe that the panel, albeit promoting a positive experience, is simply a ‘tick box’ exercise for some, and as the literature suggests, groups or professional are determining themselves what constitutes good urban design, based on attitude, the context in which they sit and the financial constraints to incorporate good design elements. It is perhaps a bleak time for urban design, and more about building homes.

# Chapter 7

# Conclusion

The Canterbury earthquake sequence of 2010 and 2011 left large parts of the city devastated, with the central city particularly hit hard. The re-build was always going to be challenging, and has been a contentious issue to say the least. From the outset, it was clear that a significant and collaborative effort would be needed, and a number of personalities and politics would play a critical part in creating a robust framework to support the re-build and regeneration of the city. Let's not forget the vision of the central city as set out by the CCRP: "the thriving heart of an international city. A central city that will attract people to live, work, play, learn, stay and invest…." (CERA, p. 3)

The rebuild and regeneration has reinforced the need for independent design review, putting more focus and emphasis on the role and use of the UDP. The overall aim of this dissertation was to develop a better understanding of the UDP's influence on residential development post-earthquake, using central city Christchurch as a case study, and how different stakeholders experience and view the UDP. Through the course of this research I have come to understand the complex nature of urban design, and the tensions that exist in delivering the final built outcome. The central city rebuild has been a contentious issue, further reinforced by the many personalities, and politics to even entertain a regulatory process. Urban design often lacks power as their arguments are more subjective, open to interpretation and less empirically grounded. This is why urban design is still viewed by some as a luxury instead of a must have, and given this, it still remains unclear on whose interest and values the review process safeguards. To ensure the UDP remains 'on point', reviews of design outcomes should be undertaken to not only ensure accountability of the Panel process, but to also evaluate how effective the process actually is. This will allow for any changes to keep the Panel current in today's climate. As suggested by this research, progress has been made, but the battle to enhance the design quality of the built environment continues.

A key finding is the tension between private developers and urban design. In today's market, developers need to achieve certain returns, and what product they supply is purely dictated by what the buyer wants and how that aligns with the commercial realities. Until the financial value of urban design can be determined, most private developers are still likely to appreciate the extent to which they can profit from investing in quality of urban design. Furthermore, the perceptions about what constitutes good urban design vary among the different stakeholders, and how they in turn influence the final built outcome. Unless market-led residential development shares the same or similar goals as the Council, the resultant urban fabric is unlikely to deliver the goals anticipated.

Overall, this research highlights that cities are not static; they constantly change and evolve in new directions, and can transform the status quo in unprecedented ways. They are both a source of, and solution to many of today's economic, social and environmental challenges. Good design cannot be achieved by prescription or regulation, or defined by a particular style or fashion. It requires continuous management and flexible planning policies or mechanisms that can be easily implemented, and understood by the varying stakeholders. Any new development is a challenge to an existing context, and as the research suggests, the role of the UDP is adding to this challenge. Until such time that the situation is remedied, including changing the perception in how the UDP is viewed, urban design and built form outcomes will continue to remain at the whim of the development community.

## 7.1 Future areas of research

This research has highlighted two key areas that warrant further investigation. Firstly, whether the quality of the built environment has genuinely improved as a result of the design review process? Secondly, the cost of urban design to developers, and whether this adds value to their financial return, or proves that good urban design does not 'gel' with good development feasibility. These will be the true measure of the influence the UDP is having on the built environment.

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# Appendix A

# Research Information Sheet and Interview Questions

## The Christchurch Urban Design Panel: Its role and influence in central city Christchurch post-earthquake?

You are invited to participate in a research project exploring the role of the urban design panel and its influence post-earthquake on residential development within the central city. This research is part of a dissertation project for my Master of Planning degree at Lincoln University.

The overall aim of this research is to describe the role of the urban design panel on central city Christchurch, and develop a better understanding of the panel's influence post-earthquake with regards to residential development. A large body of literature focuses on the idea that cities should be actively planned, with a focus on design excellence in central urban areas to reinvigorate centres of human activity. Urban review panels are widely mentioned in the literature as a valuable tool in promoting high quality urban environments; however there appears to be a gap in the research over the role of the urban design panel and how they are influencing development.

We have invited you to participate because of your professional background and individual experience in urban design and development in the central city. Your participation will involve an interview which will take approximately ½ - 1 hour to complete. You may choose to keep your name, identity and role confidential, known only to myself and my supervisor. Any consent forms, interview transcripts or recordings will be stored electronically on password protected computers, accessible only by me. You will have the opportunity to review any information we attribute to you in published form, and confirm the level of anonymity you require on a case by case basis. You may decline to answer any of our questions in the interview. You may also withdraw from the project, including withdrawing any information you have provided, at any time up to 27 March 2020. You can do this by me. Please let me know, as soon as possible, if you are happy to participate in the research and whether you are available to meet with me.

If you have any queries or concerns about your participation in the project, please contact me or my supervisor; we would be happy to discuss any concerns you have about participation in the project.

Researcher: Matt McLachlan

Lincoln University

Email: matt@do.nz

Ph: 021 325 891

Supervisor: Dr Suzanne Vallance

Senior Lecturer. Lincoln University

Email: Suzanne.vallance@lincoln.ac.na

Ph: 03 423 0444 or 021 822 023

This project has been reviewed and approved by the Lincoln University Human Ethics Committee on

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## General Interview Questions

1. How would you define urban design?
2. What are the biggest barriers to good urban design in the central city?
3. What are the most significant enablers of good urban design in the central city?
4. How would you describe the role of the urban design panel?
5. Do you think the role of the urban design panel has changed given the uptake of residential development within the central city?
6. In your opinion what are some of the advantages and disadvantages of using the urban design panel process?
7. In your opinion, how has the urban design panel influenced the overall process of residential development in the central city?
8. Have you got any other comments on urban design and/or the urban design panel?

# Appendix B

# Consent Form

## Name of the project: The Christchurch Urban Design Panel: Its role and influence in central city Christchurch post-earthquake

*The objective of this research project is to develop a better understanding of the urban design panel's influence post-earthquake on residential development in the central city*

I agree to participate in the project, and I consent to publication of the results of the project with the understanding that a) anonymity will be preserved if requested and b) I will have the opportunity to review any quotations attributed to me before publication. I also understand that I may withdraw from the project on or before March 27 2020 (including withdrawal of any information I have provided) by contacting the researcher.

I provide consent to (please tick one or all of the following options):

Having an audio recording taken ☐

Having notes taken of the interview ☐

Being identified by name ☐

Being identified by my profession or role ☐

Any other requests from participant about confidentiality and anonymity:

_____

_____

_____

Name: Date:

_____

Signed: _____

# Appendix C

# Human Ethics Approval

**22 January 2020**

**Application No: 2020-01**

**Title:** The Christchurch Urban Design Panel: Its role and influence in Central Christchurch post-earthquake

**Applicant**: M McLachlan

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*The Lincoln University Human Ethics Committee has reviewed the above noted application.*
Thank you for your response to the questions which were forwarded to you on the Committee's behalf.

I am satisfied on the Committee's behalf that the issues of concern have been satisfactorily addressed. I am pleased to give final approval to your project.

Please note that this approval is valid for three years from today's date at which time you will need to reapply for renewal.

Once your field work has finished can you please advise the Human Ethics Secretary, Alison Hind, and confirm that you have complied with the terms of the ethical approval.

May I, on behalf of the Committee, wish you success in your research.

Yours sincerely

Grant Tavinor
Chair, Human Ethics Committee

**PLEASE NOTE:** The Human Ethics Committee has an audit process in place for applications. Please see 7.3 of the Human Ethics Committee Operating Procedures (ACHE) in the Lincoln University Policies and Procedures Manual for more information.

Cc: Suzanne Vallance